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HERVEY

THE

Works

OF

JAMES HERVEY, A. M.

LATE RECTOR OF WESTON-FAVELL,
In Northamptonshire.

Vol. I.

CONTAINING

MEDITATIONS AMONG THE TOMBS;
REFLECTIONS ON A FLOWER-GARDEN,
A DESCANT ON CREATION,
CONTEMPLATIONS ON THE NIGHT,
CONTEMPLATIONS ON THE STARRY HEAVENS;
AND, A WINTER PIECE.

' Every stone that we look upon, in this repository of past ages, is both an entertainment, and a monitor ' ——*Plain-Dealer, Vol. I. No.* 42.



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PREFACE.



THE first of these occasional meditations, begs leave to remind my readers of their latter end; *and would invite them to set, not their houses only, but, which is inexpressibly more needful, their souls, in order: that they may be able, through all the intermediate stages, to look forward upon their approaching exit, without any* anxious apprehensions: *and, when the great change commences, may bid adieu to terrestrial things, with all the* calmness *of a chearful resignation, with all the* comforts *of a well grounded faith.*

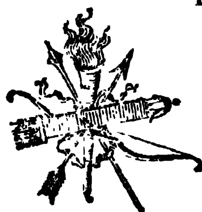
The other attempts to sketch out some little traces of the all-sufficiency *of our* REDEEMER, *for the grand and gracious purposes of everlasting salvation. That a sense of his unutterable dignity, and infinite perfections, may incite us to regard him, with sentiments of the most profound* veneration; *to long for an assured interest in his merits, with all the ardency of* desire; *and to trust in his powerful mediation, with an* affiance *not to be shaken by any temptations, not to be shared with any performances of our own.*

I flatter myself, that the thoughts conceived among the tombs, *may be welcome to the* serious *and* humane *mind. Because, as there are few, who have not consigned the remains of some dear* relations, *or beloved* friends, *to those silent repositories; so there are none, but must be sensible, that this is the* house appointed for all living; *and that they themselves, are shortly to remove into the same solemn mansions.—And who would not turn aside, for a while, from the most favourite amusements, to view the* place, *where his once-loved* companions *lie? who would not sometimes survey those* apartments, *where he* himself *is to take up an* abode, *till time shall be no more?*

As to the other little essay, may I not humbly presume, that the very subject itself will recommend the remarks? For, who is not delighted with the prospect of the blooming creation, and even charmed with the delicate attractions *of flowers? Who does not covet to assemble them in the garden, or wear them in a nosegay? Since this is a passion so universal, who would not be willing to render it produc-*

tive of the sublimest improvement?—This piece of holy frugality, *I have ventured to suggest, and endeavoured to exemplify, in the second letter; that, while the hand is cropping the transient beauties of a flower, the attentive mind may be enriching itself with solid and lasting good.—And I cannot but entertain some pleasing hopes, that the nicest taste may receive and relish* religious impressions, *when they are conveyed by such* lovely monitors; *when the instructive lessons are found, not on the leaves of some formidable* folio, *but stand legible on the fine* sarcenet *of a* narcissus; *when they savour not of the* lamp *and* recluse, *but come breathing from the fragrant bosom of a* jonquil.







MEDITATIONS AMONG THE TOMBS.

IN A LETTER TO A LADY.

Madam,

TRAVELLING lately into *Cornwall*, I happened to alight at a considerable village, in that county: where finding myself under an unexpected necessity of staying a little, I took a walk to the *Church*.* The doors, like the Heaven to which they lead, were wide open; and readily admitted an unworthy stranger. Pleased with the opportunity, I resolved to spend a few minutes under the sacred roof.

In a situation so retired and awful, I could not avoid falling into a train of meditations, *serious* and *mournfully pleasing*. Which, I trust, were in some degree profitable to *me*, while they possessed and warmed my thoughts; and if they may administer any satisfaction to *you*, madam, now they are recollected, and committed to writing, I shall receive a fresh pleasure from them.

It was an ancient pile; reared by hands, that, ages ago, were mouldered into dust.—Situate in the centre of a large *burial-ground;* remote from all the noise and hurry of tumultuous life.—The body spacious; the structure lofty; the whole manificently plain. A row of regular pillars ex-

* I had named, in some former editions, a particular church, *viz.* KILKHAMPTON; where several of the monuments, described in the following pages, really exist. But as I thought it convenient, to mention some cases *here*, which are not, according to the best of my remembrance, referred to in any inscriptions *there;* I have now omitted the name.—That imagination might operate more freely, and the improvement of the reader be consulted, without any thing that should look like a variation from truth and fact.

tended themselves through the midst; supporting the roof with simplicity, and with dignity. The light, that passed through the windows, seemed to shed a kind of *luminous obscurity;* which gave every object a grave and venerable air.—The deep *silence,* added to the gloomy aspect, and both heightened by the loneliness of the place, greatly increased the solemnity of the scene.—A sort of *religious dread* stole insensibly on my mind, while I advanced, all pensive and thoughtful, along the inmost aisle. Such a dread, as hushed every ruder passion, and dissipated all the gay images of an alluring world.

Having adored that Eternal Majesty, who, far from being confined to temples made-with hands, has heaven for his throne, and the earth for his footstool—I took particular notice of a handsome *altar-piece;* presented, as I was afterwards informed, by the master-builders of *Stow** out of gratitude, I presume, to that gracious God, who carried them through their work, and enabled them to "bring forth "their top-stone with joy."

O! how amiable is *Gratitude!* especially when it has the supreme Benefactor for its object. I have always looked upon gratitude, as the most exalted principle that can actuate the heart of man. It has something noble, disinterested, and (if I may be allowed the term) generously devout. *Repentance* indicates our nature fallen, and *Prayer* turns chiefly upon a regard to one's self. But the exercises of gratitude subsisted in Paradise, when there was no fault to deplore; and will be perpetuated in heaven, when "God shall be all in all."

The language of this sweet temper is, "I am unspeakably obliged: what return shall I make?"—And, surely, it is no improper expression of an unfeigned thankfulness, to decorate our Creator's courts, and *beautify* "the *Place* "where his honor dwelleth." Of old, the habitation of his feet was glorious: let it not, now, be sordid or contemptible. It must grieve an ingenuous mind, and be a

* The name of a grand seat, belonging to the late Earl of *Bath:* remarkable formerly for its excellent workmanship, and elegant furniture; once the principal resort of the quality and gentry of the West; but now demolished, laid even with the ground, and scarce one stone left upon another.—So that corn may grow, or nettles spring, where *Stow* lately stood.

reproach to any people, to have their own houses wainscoted with cedar, and painted with vermillion; while the temple of the Lord of hosts is destitute of every decent ornament.

HERE I recollected, and was charmed with, *Solomon's* fine address to the Almighty, at the *dedication* of his famous temple. With immense charge, and exquisite skill, he had erected the most rich and finished structure, that the sun ever saw. Yet, upon a review of his work, and a reflection on the transcendent perfections of the Godhead, how he exalts the one and abases the other!—The building was too *glorious*, for the mightiest monarch to inhabit; too *sacred*, for unhallowed feet even to enter; yet infinitely too *mean*, for the Deity to reside in. It was, and the royal worshipper acknowledged it to be, a most marvellous vouchsafement in uncreated excellency, to "put his name "there."—The whole passage breathes such a delicacy, and is animated with such a sublimity of sentiment, that I cannot persuade myself to pass on, without repeating it.—* *But will GOD indeed dwell on earth? behold! the heaven, and heaven of heavens, cannot contain thee; how much less this house, that I have builded!*—Incomparable saying! worthy the wisest of men. Who would not choose to possess such an elevated devotion, rather than to own all the glittering materials of that sumptuous edifice?

WE are apt to be struck with admiration, at the stateliness and grandeur of a masterly performance in architec-

* 1 *Kings*, viii. 27. *But will*—A fine abrupt beginning, most significantly describing the amazement and rapture of the royal prophet's mind!—*GOD*: he uses no epithet, where writers of inferior discernment would have been fond to multiply them: but speaks of the Deity, as an incomprehensible Being, whose perfections and glories are exalted above all praise.—*Dwell*: to bestow on sinful creatures a propitious look; to favour them with a transient visit of kindness; even this were an unutterable obligation. Will he then vouchsafe to fix his abode among them, and take up his stated residence with them?—*Indeed*: a word in this connexion, peculiarly emphatical; expressive of a condescension, wonderful and extraordinary almost beyond all credibility.—*Behold*: intimating the continued, or rather the increasing surprise of the speaker; and awakening the attention of the hearer. *Behold! the heaven*: the spacious concave of the firmament; that wide extended azure circumference, in which worlds unnumbered perform their revolutions, is too scanty an apartment for the Godhead.—Nay, *the heaven of heavens*: those vastly higher tracts, which lie far beyond the limits of human survey? to which our very thoughts can hardly soar; even these (unbounded as they are) cannot afford an adequate habitation for JEHOVAH: even these dwindle into a point, when compared with the infinitude of his essence; even these "are as nothing before him."—*How much less* proportionate is this poor diminutive speck (which I have been erecting and embellishing) to so august a presence, so immense a majesty!

ture. And, perhaps, on a sight of the ancient sanctuary, should have made the *superficial* observation of the disciples; "what manner of stones, and what buildings are "here!"—But what a *nobler* turn of thought, and *juster* taste of things, does it discover; to join with *Israel's* king, in celebrating the condescension of the divine inhabitant! That the High and Lofty One, who fills immensity with his glory, should, in a peculiar manner, fix his abode there! should *there* manifest an extraordinary degree of his benedictive presence; permit sinful mortals to approach his Majesty; and promise "to make them joyful in his house of prayer!"—*This* should more sensibly affect our hearts, than the most curious arrangement of stones can delight our eyes.

NAY, the everlasting GOD does not disdain to dwell in our *souls* by his holy spirit; and to make even our *bodies* his temple.—Tell me, ye that frame critical judgments, and balance nicely the distinction of things; "Is this most astonishing, or most rejoicing?—He humbleth himself, the scripture assures us, even to behold the things that are in heaven.*. 'Tis a most condescending favour, if HE pleases to take the least approving notice of angels and archangels; when they bow down in homage from their celestial thrones. Will he then graciously regard, will he be united, most *intimately united* to poor, polluted, breathing dust?—Unparalleled honor! invaluable privilege! Be this my portion, and I shall not covet crowns, nor envy conquerors.

BUT let me remember what a *sanctity* of disposition, and *uprightness* of conversation, so exalted a relation demands: remember this, "and rejoice with trembling."—Durst I commit any iniquity, while I tread these hallowed courts? Could the *Jewish* high-priest allow himself in any known transgression, while he made that solemn yearly entrance† into the Holy of Holies, and stood before the immediate presence of *JEHOVAH?* no, truly. In *such* circumstances, a thinking person must shudder at the most remote solicitation, to any wilful offence. I should *now* be shocked at the least indecency of behaviour, and am apprehensive of

* Psal. cxiii. 6.

† Heb. ix. 7.

every appearance of evil.—And why do we not carry this holy jealousy, into all our *ordinary* life? Why do we not, in every place,* reverence ourselves; as persons dedicated to the divinity, as *living temples* of the Godhead? For, if we are real, and not merely nominal christians, the God of Glory, according to his own promise, † *dwells in us, and walks in us.*—O! that this *one* doctrine of our religion might operate, with an abiding efficacy, upon our consciences! it would be instead of a *thousand* laws, to regulate our conduct; instead of a *thousand* motives to quicken us in holiness. Under the influence of *such* a conviction, we should study to maintain a purity of intention; a dignity of action; and to walk worthy of that transcendently majestic Being, who admits us to a fellowship with Himself, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

The next thing, which engaged my attention, was the *lettered floor.* The pavement, somewhat like *Ezekiel's* roll, was written over from one end to the other. I soon perceived the comparison to hold good, in another respect; and the inscriptions to be matter of *mourning, lamentation, and woe.*"‡ They seemed to court my observation; silently inviting me to read them. And what would these dumb monitors inform me of?—"That beneath their little circumferences, were deposited such and such pieces of clay, "which once *lived*, and *moved*, and *talked:* that they had "received a charge to preserve their names, and were the "remaining trustees of their memory."

Ah! said I, is such my situation! the adorable Creator around me, and the bones of my fellow-creatures under me! Surely, then, I have great reason to cry out, with the revering Patriarch, *how dreadful is this place!*§ Seriousness and devotion become this house for ever. May I never enter it lightly or irreverently; but with a profound awe, and godly fear!

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* ——— ——— ——— "Above all things reverence thyself," was the favourite maxim of *Pythagoras*, and supposed to be one of the best moral precepts, ever given to the heathen world. With what superior force, and very singular advantage, does the argument take place in the christian scheme? Where we are taught to regard ourselves, not merely as *intellectual beings*, who have *reason* for our monitor; but as *consecrated creatures*, who have a God of the most consummate perfection, ever *with* us, ever *in* us

† 2 Cor. vi. 16 ‡ Ezek. ii. 10. § Gen. xxviii. 17.

*O! that they were wise!** said the inspired penman. It was his last wish for his dear people. He breathed it out, and gave up the ghost.—But what is wisdom? it consists not in refined speculations; accurate researches into nature; or an universal acquaintance with history. The divine lawgiver settles this important point in his next aspiration: *O! that they understood this!* That they had right apprehensions of their spiritual interests, and eternal concerns! That they had eyes to discern, and inclinations to pursue, the things which belong to their peace!—But how shall they attain this valuable knowledge? I send them not, adds the illustrious teacher, to turn over all the volumes of literature: they may acquire, and much more expeditiously, this science of life, *by considering their latter end.* This spark of heaven is often lost under the glitter of pompous erudition; but shines clearly, in the gloomy mansions of the tomb. Drowned is this gentle whisper, amidst the noise of secular affairs; but speaks distinctly, in the *retirements* of serious contemplation.—Behold! how providentially I am brought to the school of wisdom!† The grave, is the most faithful ‡ master; and these instances of mortality, the most instructive lessons.—Come then, *calm attention*, and compose my thoughts; come, thou *celestial spirit*, and enlighten my mind; that I may so peruse these awful pages, as to become "wise unto salvation."

Examining the records of mortality, I found the memorials of a *promiscuous* multitude. They were huddled, at least they rested together, without any regard to rank or seniority. None were ambitious of the uppermost rooms, or chief seats, in this house of mourning; none entertained fond and eager expectations of being honorably greeted, in their darksome cells. The man of years and experience, reputed as an oracle in his generation, was content to lie

* Deut xxxii 29.

† The man how wise, who sick of gaudy scenes,
Is led by choice to take his favourite walk
Beneath death's gloomy, silent, cypress shades,
Unpierc'd by vanity's fantastic ray?
To read his monuments, to weigh his dust,
Visit his vaults, and dwell among the tombs! *Night Thoughts*

‡ Wait the great teacher death.—Pope.

down at the feet of a babe. In this house, appointed for all living, the servant was equally accommodated, and lodged in the same story, with his master. The *poor indigent* lay as softly, and slept as soundly, as the most *opulent possessor.* All the distinction that subsisted, was a grassy hillock, bound with osiers; or a sepulchral stone, ornamented with imagery.

WHY then, said my working thoughts, O! why should we raise such a mighty stir about *superiority* and *precedence;* when the next remove, will reduce us all to a state of equal meanness? Why should we exalt ourselves, or debase others? since we must all, one day, be upon a common level, and blended together in the same undistinguished dust? O! that this consideration might humble my own, and others pride; and sink our imaginations as low, as our habitation will shortly be!

Among these confused relics of humanity, there are, without doubt, persons of *contrary* interests, and *contradicting* sentiments. But death, like some able days-man, has laid his hand on the contending parties; and brought all their differences to an amicable conclusion. Here enemies, sworn enemies, dwell together in unity. They drop every imbittered thought, and forget that they once were foes. Perhaps, their crumbling bones *mix*, as they *moulder:* and those who, while they lived, stood aloof in irreconcileable variance; here fall into mutual embraces, and even incorporate with each other in the grave.—O! that we might learn from these friendly ashes, not to perpetuate the memory of *injuries*; not to foment the fever of *resentment;* nor cherish the turbulence of *passion.* That there may be as little animosity and disagreement in the land of the living, as there is in the congregation of the dead!—But I suspend for a while such *general* observations, and address myself to a more *particular* inquiry.

YONDER *white stone*, emblem of the innocence it covers informs the beholder of one, who breathed out its tender soul, almost in the instant of receiving it.—There, the peaceful *infant*, without so much as knowing what labour and vexation mean. "* lies still and is quiet; it sleeps and

* Job iii 13.

is at rest." Staying only to wash away its native impurity in the laver of regeneration, it bid a speedy adieu to time, and terrestrial things.—What did the little hasty sojourner find, so forbidding and disgustful in our upper world, to occasion its precipitate exit? 'Tis written, indeed, of its suffering Saviour, that when he had tasted the vinegar mixed with gall, he would not drink.* And did our new-come stranger, begin to *sip* the cup of life: but, perceiving the bitterness, turn away its head, and refuse the *draught*? Was this the cause why the wary babe only opened its eyes; just looked on the light, and then withdrew, into the more inviting regions of undisturbed repose?

HAPPY voyager! no sooner launched, than *arrived* at the haven!†—But more eminently happy *they*, who have passed the waves, and weathered all the storms, of a troublesome and dangerous world! Who, "through many tribulations, "have entered into the kingdom of heaven;" and thereby brought *honor* to their divine convoy, administered *comfort* to the companions of their toil, and left an instructive *example* to succeeding pilgrims.

HIGHLY favoured probationer! accepted, without being exercised!—It was thy peculiar privilege, not to *feel* the slightest of those evils, which *oppress* thy surviving kindred; which frequently fetch groans, from the most manly fortitude, or most elevated faith. The arrows of calamity, barbed with anguish, are *often* fixed deep in our choicest comforts. The fiery darts of temptation, shot from the hand of hell, are *always* flying in showers around our integrity. To thee, sweet babe, both these distresses and dangers were alike unknown.

CONSIDER this, ye *mourning parents*, and dry up your tears. Why should you lament, that your little ones are crowned with victory, before the sword was drawn, or the conflict begun?—Perhaps, the supreme disposer of events, foresaw some inevitable snare of temptation forming, or some dread-

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* Matt. xxvii 34.

† Happy the babe, who privileg'd by fate
To shorter labour, and a lighter weight,
Receiv'd but yesterday the gift of breath,
Order'd to-morrow to return to death. —PRIOR's *Sol*

ful storm of adversity impending. And why should you be so dissatisfied, with that *kind precaution;* which housed your pleasant plant, and removed into shelter a tender flower, before the thunders roared: before the lightnings flew; before the tempest poured its rage?—O remember! they are not lost, but *taken away from the evil to come.**

At the same time, let *survivors,* doomed to *bear the heat and burden of the day,* for their encouragement reflect—that it is more honorable to have entered the lists, and to have fought the good fight, before they come off conquerors. They who have bore the cross, and submitted to afflictive providences, with a chearful resignation; have girded up the loins of their mind, and performed their Master's will, with an honest and persevering fidelity:—these, having glorified their Redeemer on earth, will, probably, be as stars of the *first magnitude* in heaven. They will shine with brighter beams, be replenished with stronger joys, in their LORD's everlasting kingdom.

HERE lies the grief of a fond mother, and the blasted expectation of an indulgent father.—The *youth* grew up, like a well-watered plant; he shot deep, rose high, and bid fair for manhood. But just as the *cedar* began to tower; and promised, ere long, to be the pride of the wood, and prince among the neighbouring trees—behold! the *ax* is laid unto the root; the fatal blow struck; and all its branching honors tumbled to the dust.—And did he fall alone? no: the hopes of his father that begat him, and the pleasing prospects of her that bare him, fell, and were crushed together with him.

DOUBTLESS, it would have pierced one's heart, to have beheld the tender parents, following the breathless youth to his long home. Perhaps, drowned in tears, and all overwhelmed with sorrows, they stood, like weeping statues, on this very spot.—Methinks, I see the deeply-distressed mourners attending the sad solemnity. How they wring their hands, and pour floods from their eyes!—Is it fancy? or do I really hear the passionate *mother,* in an agony of affliction, taking her final leave of the darling of her soul? Dumb she remained, while the awful obsequies were per-

* Isai. lvii, 1.

forming; dumb with grief, and leaning upon the partner of her woes. But now the inward anguish struggles for vent; it grows too big to be repressed. She advances to the brink of the grave. All her soul is in her eyes. She fastens one more look upon the *dear doleful* object, before the pit shuts its mouth upon him. And as she looks, she cries;—in broken accents, interrupted by many a rising sob, she cries—"Farewell, my son! my son! my only be-"loved! Would to God I had died for thee!—Farewell, "my child; and farewell all my earthly happiness;—I "shall never more see good, in the land of the living.—"Attempt not to comfort me.—I will go mourning, all "my days, till my grey hairs come down, with sorrow, to "the grave."

From this affecting representation, let parents be convinced, how highly it concerns them to cultivate the *morals*, and secure the *immortal* interests of their children.—If you really love the offspring of your own bodies; if your bowels yearn over those amiable pledges of conjugal endearment; spare no pains; give all diligence, I intreat you, to "bring "them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Then, may you have joy in their life, or consolation in their death. If their span is *prolonged;* their unblameable and useful conduct, will be the staff of your age, and a balm for declining nature. Or, if the number of their years be cut off in the *midst;* you may commit their remains to the dust, with much the same comfortable expectations, as you send the survivors to places of genteel education. You may commit them to the dust, with chearing hopes of receiving them again to your arms; *inexpressibly improved* in every noble and endearing accomplishment.

'Tis certainly a *severe trial;* and much more afflictive, than I am able to imagine; to resign a lovely blooming creature, sprung from your own loins, to the gloomy recesses of corruption. *Thus* to resign him, after having been long dandled upon your knees; united to your affections by a thousand ties of tenderness; and now become both the delight of your eyes, and the support of your family!—To have such a one torn from your bosom, and thrown into darkness; doubtless, it must be like a dagger in your hearts.—But O! how much more cutting to you,

and confounding to the child, to have the soul separated from God; and, for *shameful ignorance*, or *early impiety*, transmitted to places of eternal torment! how would it aggravate your distress, and add a distracting *emphasis* to all your sighs, if you should follow the pale corpse with these bitter reflections!—" This dear creature, though long ago " capable of knowing good from evil, is gone *out* of the " world, before it had learned the great design of coming " *into* it. A short-lived momentary existence, it received " from me; but no good instructions, no holy admonitions, " nothing to further its well-being in that everlasting state, " upon which it is now entered. The *poor body* is con- " signed to the coffin, and carried out to consume away, " in the cold and silent grave. And what reason have I " to suppose, that the *precious soul* is in a better condition? " may I not justly fear, that, sentenced by the righteous " Judge, it is going, or gone away, into the pains of end- " less punishment?—Perhaps, while I am *bewailing* its un- " timely departure; it may be *cursing*, in outer darkness, " that ever to be deplored, that most calamitous day, when " it was born of such a careless, ungodly parent, as I have " been."

Nothing, I think, but the gnawings of that worm which never dies, can equal the anguish of these self-condemning thoughts. The tortures of a rack must be an easy suffering, compared with the stings and horror of such a remorse.—How earnestly do I wish, that as many as are entrusted with the management of children, would take timely care to prevent these scourges of conscience; by endeavouring to conduct their minds into an early *knowledge* of Christ, and a cordial *love* of his truth!

On this hand is lodged one, whose sepulchral stone tells a most pitiable tale indeed! well may the *little images*, reclined over the sleeping ashes, hang down their heads with that pensive air! none can consider so mournful a story, without feeling some touches of sympathizing concern.—His *age* twenty-eight; his death *sudden*; himself cut down in the prime of life, amidst all the vivacity and vigour of manhood; while " his breasts were full of milk, and his " bones moistened with marrow."—Probably, he entertained no apprehensions of the evil hour. And indeed,

who could have suspected, that so bright a sun should go down at noon? to human appearance, his hill stood strong. Length of days seemed written in his sanguine countenance. He solaced himself with the prospect of a long, long series of earthly satisfactions.—When, lo! an unexpected stroke descends! descends from that mighty Arm, which "over-"turneth the mountains by their roots; and crushes the "imaginary hero, *before the moth*;" as quickly, and more easily, than our fingers press such a feeble fluttering insect to death.

PERHAPS, the *nuptial joys* were all he thought on.—Were not such the breathings of his enamoured soul? "Yet a "very little while, and I shall possess the utmost of my "wishes. I shall call my charmer mine; and, in *her*, en-"joy whatever my heart can crave."—In the midst of such enchanting views, had some faithful friend but softly reminded him of an opening grave, and the end of all things; how *unseasonable* would he have reckoned the admonition! yet, though all warm with life, and rich in visionary bliss, he was even then tottering upon the brink of both.—Dreadful vicissitude! to have the *bridal* festivity turned into the *funeral* solemnity! Deplorable misfortune! to be shipwrecked in the very haven! and to perish even in sight of happiness!—What a memorable proof is here of the frailty of man, in his best estate! Look, O! look on this monument, ye *gay* and *careless!* Attend to this date; and boast no more of to-morrow!

WHO can tell, but the *bride-maids*, girded with gladness, had prepared the marriage-bed? had decked it with the richest covers, and dressed it in pillows of down? when—Oh! trust not in youth, or strength, or in any thing mortal; for there is nothing certain, nothing to be depended on, beneath the unchangeable GOD—death, relentless death, is making him another kind of bed in the dust of the earth. Unto this he must be conveyed, not with a splendid procession of *joyous attendants;* but stretched in the *gloomy hearse,* and followed by a train of mourners. On this he must take up a lonely lodging, nor ever be released, "till the heavens are no more."—In vain does the consenting *fair-one* put on her ornaments, and expect her spouse. Did she not, like *Sisera's* mother, look out of the lattice;

chide the delays of her beloved; and wonder "why his "chariot was so long in coming?" little thinking, that the *intended* bridegroom had for ever done with transitory things! that now everlasting cares employ his mind, without one single remembrance of his lovely *Lucinda!*—Go, disappointed virgin! go, mourn the uncertainty of all created bliss! Teach thy soul to aspire after a sure and *immutable felicity!* for the once gay and gallant *Fidelio* sleeps in other embraces; even in the icy arms of death! forgetful, eternally forgetful, of the world—and *thee*.

HITHERTO, one is tempted to exclaim against the king of terrors, and call him *capriciously cruel.* He seems, by beginning at the wrong end of the register, to have inverted the laws of nature. Passing over the couch of decrepid age, he has nipped infancy in its *bud;* blasted youth in its *bloom;* and torn up manhood in its full *maturity.*—Terrible indeed are these providences, yet not unsearchable the counsels:

*For us they sicken, and for us they die.**

SUCH strokes, must not only grieve the relatives, but *surprise* the whole neighbourhood. They sound a powerful alarm to heedless dreaming mortals, and are intended as a remedy for our carnal security. Such passing-bells, inculcate loudly our LORD's admonition; "Take ye heed, watch, "and pray: for ye know not when the time is."—We nod, like intoxicated creatures, upon the very verge of a tremendous precipice. These astonishing dispensations, are the kind messengers of heaven; to *rouse* us from our *supineness*, and quicken us into timely circumspection. I need not, surely, accommodate them with language, nor act as their interpreter. Let every one's conscience be awake, and this will appear their awful meaning—"O! ye sons of "men, in the midst of life you are in death. No state, no "circumstances, can ascertain your preservation a single "moment. So *strong* is the tyrant's arm, that nothing "can resist its force; so *true* his aim, that nothing can

* Night Thoughts.

"elude the blow. *Sudden* as lightning, sometimes, is his "arrow launched; and wounds, and kills, in the twinkling "of an eye. Never promise yourselves safety in any ex-"pedient, but constant preparation. The fatal shafts fly "so promiscuously, that none can guess the next victim. "Therefore, *be ye always ready: for in such an hour as ye* "*think not*, the final summons cometh."

Be ye always ready: for in such an hour as ye think not— important admonition! methinks, it reverberates from sepulchre to sepulchre; and addresses me with line upon line, precept upon precept.—The reiterated warning, I acknowledge, is too needful; may co-operating grace, render it effectual! The momentous truth, though worthy to be *engraved*, on the tables of a most tenacious memory; is but slightly *sketched*, on the transient flow of passion. We see our neighbours fall; we turn pale at the shock; and feel, perhaps, a trembling dread. No sooner are they removed from our sight; but, driven in the whirl of business, or lulled in the languors of pleasure, we forget the Providence, and neglect its errand. The impression made on our unstable minds, is like the trace of an arrow, through the penetrated air; or the path of a keel, in the furrowed wave.—Strange stupidity! to cure it, another monitor bespeaks me, from a neighbouring stone. It contains the narrative of an unhappy mortal, snatched from his friends, and hurried to the awful bar; without leisure, either to take a *last farewell* of the one, or to put up so much as a *single prayer* preparatory for the other: killed, according to the usual expression, by a sudden stroke of casualty.

Was it then a random stroke? doubtless, the blow came from an *aiming*, though invisible hand. God presideth over the armies of heaven; God ruleth among the inhabitants of the earth; and God conducteth, what men call *chance*. Nothing, nothing comes to pass through a blind and undiscerning fatality. If accidents happen; they happen according to the exact foreknowledge, and conformably to the determinate counsels, of eternal Wisdom. The Lord, with whom are the issues of death, signs the *warrant*, and gives the high commission. The seemingly fortuitous disaster is only the *agent*, or the *instrument*, appointed to execute the supreme decree. When the king of *Israel*

was mortally wounded, it seemed to be a casual shot. *A certain man drew a bow at a venture.**—*At a venture*, as he thought. But his hand was strengthened by an omnipotent aid; and the shaft levelled, by an unerring eye. So that, what we term *casualty*, is really *Providence*; accomplishing deliberate designs, but concealing its own interposition.—How comforting this reflection! admirably adapted, to sooth the throbbing anguish of the mourners, and compose their spirits into a quiet submission! excellently suited, to dissipate the fears of godly survivors, and create a calm intrepidity even amidst innumerable perils!

How *thin* is the partition, between this world and another! how *short* the transition, from time to eternity! the partition, nothing more than the breath in our nostrils; and the transition may be made, in the twinkling of an eye.—Poor *Chromylus*, I remember, arose from the diversion of a card-table, and dropt into the dwellings of darkness.—One night, *Corinna* was all gaiety in her spirits, all finery in her apparel, at a magnificent ball. The next night, she lay pale and stiff, an extended corpse, and ready to be mingled with the mouldering dead.—Young *Atticus* lived to see his ample and commodious seat compleated: but not to spend one joyous hour, under the stately roof. The sashes were hung, to admit the day; but the master's eyes were closed in endless night. The apartments were furnished, to invite society, or administer repose; but their lord rests in the lower parts of the earth, in the solitary, silent chambers of the tomb. The gardens were planned, and a thousand elegant decorations designed; but alas! their intended possessor, is gone down to "the place of skulls;" is gone down to the valley of the shadow of death.

While I am recollecting, many, I question not, are experiencing the same tragical vicissitude. The eyes of that sublime Being—who sits upon the circle of the earth, and views all its inhabitants with one comprehensive glance—even now behold many tents in affliction. Such affliction, as overwhelmed the *Egyptians* in that fatal night, when the

destroying angel sheathed his arrows in all the pride of their strength.—Some, sinking to the floor from their *easy chair;* and deaf even amidst the piercing shrieks of their distracted relations.—Some, giving up the ghost, as they sit retired, or lie reclined, under the *shady arbour*, to taste the sweets of the flowery scene.—Some, as they sail, associated with a *party of pleasure*, along the dancing stream, and through the laughing meads. Nor is the grim intruder mollified, though wine and music flow around.—Some *intercepted*, as they are returning home; and some *interrupted*, as they enter upon an important negociation.—Some arrested, with the gain of *injustice* in their hands; and some surprized, in the very act of *lewdness*, or the attempt of *cruelty*.

LEGIONS, legions of disasters, such as no prudence can can foresee, and no care prevent, lie in wait to accomplish our doom. A *starting horse* may throw his rider; may at once dash his body against the stones, and fling his soul into the invisible world. A *stack* of *chimnies* may tumble into the street, and crush the unwary passenger under the ruins. Even a single *tile*, dropping from the roof, may be as fatal as the fall of the whole structure.—So frail, so very attenuated is the thread of life, that it not only bursts before the *storm*, but breaks even at a *breeze*. The most common occurrences, those, from which we suspect not the least harm, may prove the weapons of our destruction. A grape-stone, a despicable fly, may be more mortal than *Goliath*, with all his formidable armour.—Nay, if GOD give command, our very *comforts* become *killing*. The air we breathe, is our bane; and the food we eat, the vehicle of death.—That last enemy has unnumbered avenues for his approach. Yea; lies intrenched in our very bosom, and holds his fortress in the seat of our life. The crimson fluid, which *distributes health*, is impregnated with the seeds of death. Heat may inflame it, or toil oppress it; and make it destroy the parts, it was designed to cherish. Some unseen impediment may obstruct its passage, or some unknown violence may divert its course; in either of which cases, it acts the part of a poisonous draught or a deadly stab.

Ah! in what perils is vain life engaged!
What slight neglects, what trivial faults destroy
The hardiest frame! of indolence, of toil
We die; of want, of superfluity.
The all-surrounding heav'n, the vital air,
Is big with death.

SINCE then we are so liable to be dispossessed of this earthly tabernacle, let us look upon ourselves only as *tenants at will;* and hold ourselves in perpetual readiness, to depart at a moment's warning. Without such an *habitual* readiness, we are like wretches, that sleep on the top of a mast, while a horrid gulph yawns, or furious waves rage, below. And where can be the peace, what the satisfaction, of such a state?—Whereas, a prepared condition will inspire a chearfulness of temper, not to be dismayed by any alarming accident; and create a firmness of mind, not to be overthrown by the most threatening dangers. When the city is fortified with walls, furnished with provision, guarded by able and resolute troops; what have the inhabitants to fear? what may they not enjoy? So, just so, or rather by a much surer band, are connected the *real* taste of life, and the constant thought of death.

I SAID, *our very comforts may become killing.*—And see the truth inscribed by the hand, sealed with the signet, of fate. The marble, which graces yonder pillar, informs me, that, near it, are deposited the remains of *Sophronia;* the much lamented *Sophronia,* who died in *child-bed.*—How often does this calamity happen! the branch shoots; but the stem withers. The babe springs to light; but she that bare him, breathes her last. She gives life, but gives it (O pitiable consideration!) at the expence of her own; and becomes at once, a *mother* and a *corpse.*—Or else, perhaps, she expires in severe pangs, and is herself a tomb for her infant; while the melancholy complaint of a monarch's woe, is the epitaph for them both; *the children are come to the birth, and there is not strength to bring forth.**—Less to be lamented, in my opinion, *this* misfortune than the *other.*

* Isai. xxxvii. 3.

Better, for the tender stranger, to be stopped in the porch; than to enter, only to converse with affliction. Better, to find a grave in the womb; than to be exposed on a hazardous world, without the guardian of its infantile years, without the faithful guide of its youth.

THIS monument is distinguished by its finer materials, and more delicate appendages. It seems to have taken its model from an affluent hand; directed by a generous heart; which thought it could never do enough for the deceased. It seems, also, to exhibit an *emblematical* picture of *Sophronia's* person and accomplishments. Is her beauty, or, what is more than beauty, her white-robed innocence, represented by the snowy *colour?* The *surface*, smoothly polished, like her amiable temper, and engaging manners. The *whole* adorned in a well-judged medium, between extravagant pomp, and sordid negligence; like her undissembled goodness, remote from the least ostentation, yet in all points exemplary.—But ah! how vain, were all these endearing charms! how vain, the lustre of thy sprightly eye! how vain, the bloom of thy bridal youth! how vain the honors of thy superior birth! how unable to secure the lovely possessor, from the *savage violence of death*!—How ineffectual, the universal esteem of thy acquaintance; the fondness of thy transported husband; or even the spotless integrity of thy character; to prolong thy span, or procure thee a short reprieve!—The concurrence of all these circumstances, reminds me of those beautiful and tender lines:

How lov'd, how valu'd *once, avails thee not;*
To whom relateh, or by whom begot.
A heap of dust alone remains of thee:
'Tis all THOU *art!—and all the* PROUD *shall be!**

POPE'S *Miscell.*

* These verses are inscribed on a small, but elegant monument, lately erected in the great church at *Northampton.* Which, in the *heiroglyphical* decorations, corresponds with the description introduced above. In this circumstance particularly, that it is dedicated to the memory of an amiable woman, Mrs. ANNE STONHOUSE; the excellent wife of my worthy friend Dr. STONHOUSE. Who has seen all the powers of that healing art, to which I, and so many others, have been *greatly* indebted, failing in their attempts to preserve a life *dearer* to him than his own.

Nec prosunt domino, quæ prosunt omnibus, artes.

No longer his all-healing art avails;
But ev'ry remedy its master fails.

Yet, though unable to divert the stroke, christianity is sovereign to pluck out the sting of death. Is not this the silent language of those lamps, which burn, and of that *heart*, which flames; of those *palms*, which flourish, and of that *crown*, which glitters, in the well-imitated and gilded

In the midst of this tender distress, he has sought some kind of consolation, even from the sepulchral marble. By teaching it to speak, at once, his esteem for *her memory;* and his veneration for *that religion*, which she so eminently adorned Nor could this be more significantly done, than by summing up her character, in that concise, but comprehensive sentence, A SINCERE CHRISTIAN. *Concise* enough, to be the motto for a mourning ring; yet as *comprehensive*, as the most enlarged sphere of personal, social, and religious worth. For, whatsoever things are pure; whatsoever things are lovely; whatsoever things are of good report; are they not all included in that grand and noble aggregate, *a sincere christian?*

The first lines, considered in such a connection, are wonderfully plaintive and pathetic:—

How lov'd, how valu'd *once, avails thee not;*
To whom related, or by whom begot.

They sound, at least in *my* ears, like the voice of sorrow mingled with admiration. The speaker seems to have been lost, for a while, in melancholy contemplation; suddenly breaks out into this abrupt encomium; then melts into tears, and can proceed no farther. Yet, in this case, how eloquent is silence! while it hints the universal esteem which attended, and the superiority of birth which distinguished, the deceased *wife*; it expresses, beyond all the pomp of words, the yearning affection, and heart-felt affliction of the surviving *husband*.—Amidst the group of monumental marbles, which are lavish of their panegyrick; *this*, I think, resembles the incomparable address of the painter. Who, having placed, round a beautiful expiring virgin, her friends in all the agonies of grief; represented the *unequalled* anguish of the *father*, with far greater liveliness and strength, or rather with an inexpressible emphasis, by drawing a veil over *his* face.

If the last lines, are a wide departure from the beaten track of our modern epitaphs, and the very reverse of their high-flown compliments,

A heap of dust alone remains of thee!
'Tis all THOU *art!—and all the* PROUD *shall be!*

they are not without a precedent, and one of the most consummate kind. Since they breathe the very spirit of that sacred elegy, in which all the heart of the hero and the friend, seems to be dissolved; *how are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished!* 2 Sam. i. 27.—They remind the reader, of that awful lesson, which was originally dictated by the supreme Wisdom; *dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return*, Gen. iii. 19.—They inculcate, with all the force of the most convincing evidence, that solemn admonition, delivered by the prophet; *cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is HE to be accounted of?* Isa. ii. 22.

That no reader, however inattentive, might mistake the sense and design of *this* part of the *fourth* line,

'Tis ALL *thou art!*—

it is guarded above and beneath.—*Above*, is an expanded book, that seems to be waved, with an air of triumph, over the emblem of death. Which we cannot but suppose to be the volume of inspiration, as it exhibits a sort of *abridgment* of its whole contents, in those animated words; BE YE NOT SLOTHFUL, BUT FOLLOWERS OF THEM, WHO THROUGH FAITH AND PATIENCE INHERIT THE PROMISES. *Heb.* vi. 12.—*Beneath*, that every part might be pregnant with instruction, are those striking reflections; worthy the consideration of the *highest* proficient in knowledge and piety, yet obvious to the understanding of the most *untaught* reader; LIFE, HOW SHORT!—ETERNITY, HOW LONG!—May my soul learn the forcible purport of this short lesson, in her contracted span of time! and all eternity will not be too long, to rejoice in having learned it.

marble? do they not, to the discerning eye, describe the vigilance of her faith; the fervency of her devotion; her victory over the world; and the celestial diadem, which the LORD, the righteous Judge, shall give her at that day? *

How happy the husband, in such a sharer of his bed, and partner of his fortunes! their inclinations were nicely-turned *unisons*, and all their conversation was *harmony.* How silken the yoke to such a pair, and what blessings were twisted with such bands! every joy was heightened, and every care alleviated. Nothing seemed wanting to consummate their bliss, but a hopeful progeny, rising around them.—That they might see themselves, multiplied in their little ones; see their mingled graces, transfused into their offspring; and feel the glow of their affection *augmented*, by being *reflected* from their children. "Grant us "this gift, said their united prayers, and our satisfactions "are crowned: we request no more."

ALAS! how blind are mortals to future events! how unable to discern, what is really good! *Give me children*, said *Rachael, or else I die.*† An ardor of impatience, altogether unbecoming; and as mistaken, as it was unbecoming. She dies, not by the *disappointment*, but by the *accomplishment*, of her desire.—If children are, to parents, like a flowery chaplet, whose beauties blossom with ornament, and whose odours breathe delight; death, or some fell misfortune, may find means to entwine themselves with the lovely wreath. Whenever our souls are poured, out, with passionate importunity, after any inferior acquisition: it may be truly said, in the words of our divine Master, *ye know not what ye ask.*—Does Providence with-hold the thing that we long for? it denies in mercy; and only with-holds the occasion of our misery, perhaps the instrument of our ruin. With a sickly appetite, we often lothe what is wholesome, and hanker after our bane. Where, *imagination* dreams of unmingled sweets; there, *experience* frequently finds the bitterness of woe.

* Tim. iv. 8. † Gen. xxx. 1.

Therefore, may we covet immoderately, neither this nor that form of earthly felicity; but refer the whole of our condition, to the choice of unerring Wisdom. May we learn to renounce our own will; and be ready to make a sacrifice of our warmest wishes, whenever they run counter to the good pleasure of God. For, indeed, as to obey his laws, is to be perfectly free; so, to *resign* ourselves to his disposal, is to *establish* our own happiness, and to be secure from fear of evil.

Here, a small and plain stone is placed upon the ground. Purchased, one would imagine, from the little fund, and formed by the hand, of frugality itself. Nothing costly: not one decoration added: only a very short inscription; and that so effaced, as to be scarcely intelligible.—Was the depositary unfaithful to its trust? Or were the letters worn, by the frequent resort of the surviving family; to mourn over the grave, of a most valuable and beloved relative?—For I perceive, upon a closer inspection, that it covers the remains of a father. A *religious father;* snatched from his growing offspring, before they were settled in the world, or so much as their principles fixed by a thorough education.

This, sure, is the most complicated distress, that has hitherto come under our consideration. The *solemnities* of such a *dying chamber*, are some of the most melting and melancholy scenes imaginable.—There lies the affectionate husband; the indulgent parent; the faithful friend; and the generous master. He lies in the last extremities, and on the very point of dissolution. Art has done its all. The raging disease mocks the power of medicine. It hastens, with resistless impetuosity, to execute its dreadful errand; to rend asunder the silver cord of life, and the more delicate tie of social attachment, and conjugal affection.

A *servant* or two, from a revering distance, cast many a wishful look, and condole their honored master in the language of sighs. The condescending mildness of his commands, was wont to produce an alacrity of obedience, and render their service a pleasure. The remembrance of both imbitters their grief, and makes it trickle plentifully down their honest cheeks.—His *friends*, who have so often

shared his joys, and gladdened his mind with their enlivening converse, now are miserable comforters. A sympathizing and mournful pity, is all the relief, they are able to contribute: unless it be augmented by their silent prayers for the Divine succour, and a word of consolation suggested from the scriptures.*—Those poor innocents, the *children*, croud around the bed; drowned in tears and almost frantic with grief, they sob out their little souls, and passionately cry; "will he leave us? leave us, in a helpless condition! "leave us to an injurious world!"

THESE separate streams are all united in the distressed *spouse*, and overwhelm her breast with an impetuous tide of sorrows. In her, the lover weeps; the wife mourns; and all the mother yearns. To her, the loss is beyond measure aggravated by months and years of delightful society, and exalted friendship.—Where, alas! can she meet with such unsuspected fidelity, or repose such unreserved confidence? where find so discreet a counsellor; so improving an example; and a guardian so sedulously attentive, to the interests of herself, and her children?—See! how she hangs over the languishing bed; most tenderly solicitous to prolong a life, important and desirable far beyond her own.—Or, if that be impracticable, no less tenderly officious to sooth the last agonies of her *dearer self*.—Her hands, trembling under direful apprehensions, wipe the cold dews from the livid cheeks; and sometimes stay the sinking head on her gentle arms, sometimes rest it on her compassionate bosom.—See! how she gazes, with a speechless ardor, on the pale countenance, and meagre features. Speechless her tongue; but she looks unutterable things. While all her soft passions throb with unavailing fondness, and her very soul bleeds with exquisite anguish.

THE *sufferer*, all patient and adoring, submits to the divine will; and, by submission, becomes superior to his affliction. He is sensibly touched with the disconsolate state of his attendants; and pierced with an anxious concern,

* Texts of scripture, proper for such an occasion; containing promises of support under affliction, *Lam.* iii. 32. *Heb.* xii. 6. 2 *Cor.* iv. 17.—of pardon, *Isai.* liii. 5. *Isai.* i. 18. 1 *John* ii. 1, 2. *Acts* x. 43.—of justification, *Rom.* v. 9. *Rom.* viii. 33, 34. 2 *Cor.* v. 21.—of victory over death, *Psal.* xxiii. 4. *Psal.* lxxiii. 26. 1 *Cor.* xv. 56, 57.—of a happy resurrection, *John* vi. 40. 2 *Cor.* v. 1. *Rev.* vii. 16, 17.

for his wife and his children. His wife, who will soon be a *destitute widow*; his children, who will soon be *helpless orphans*. "Yet though cast down, not in despair," He is greatly refreshed, by his trust in the everlasting covenant, and his hope of approaching glory. Religion gives a dignity to distress. At each interval of ease, he comforts his very comforters; and suffers with all the majesty of woe.

The soul, just going to abandon the tottering clay, collects all her force, and exerts her *last* efforts. The good man raises himself on his pillow; extends a kind hand to his servants, which is bathed in tears; takes an affecting farewell of his friends; clasps his wife in a feeble embrace; kisses the dear pledges of their mutual love; then pours all that remains of life and of strength, in the following words: —"I die, *my* dear *children*: but God, the everlasting God, "will be with you.—Though you lose an earthly parent; "you have a father in heaven, who lives for evermore.— "Nothing, nothing but an unbelieving heart, and irreligious life, can ever separate you, from the regards of his "providence—from the endearments of his love."

He could proceed no farther. His heart was full; but utterance failed.—After a short pause, with difficulty, great difficulty, he added;—"You, the dear *partner* of my soul, "you are now the only protector of our orphans.—I leave "you under a weight of cares.—But God, who defendeth "the cause of the widow—God, whose promise is faith- "fulness and truth—God hath said, *I will never leave thee,* "*nor forsake thee.**—This revives my drooping spirits— "let this support the wife of my bosom—and now, O Fa- "ther of compassions, into thy hands I commend my spirit "—encouraged by thy promised goodness, *I leave my fa-* "*therless*"—

Here, he fainted; fell back upon the bed; and lay, for some minutes, bereft of his senses. As a *taper*, upon the very point of extinction, is sometimes suddenly rekindled, and leaps into a quivering flame: so *life*, before it totally expired, gave a parting struggle, and once more looked abroad from the opening eye-lids.—He would fain have

* Heb. xiii. 5.

spoke; fain have uttered the sentence, he began. More than once he assayed: but the organs of speech, were become like a broken vessel; and nothing but the obstructing phlegm, rattled in his throat. His *aspect*, however, *spoke* affection inexpressible. With all the father, all the husband still living in his looks; he takes one more view of those *dear children*, whom he had often beheld with a parental triumph. He turns his dying eyes on that *beloved woman*, whom he never beheld but with a glow of delight. Fixed in this posture, amidst smiles of love, and under a gleam of heaven, they shine out their last.

Upon this, the silent sorrow burst into loud laments.— They weep, and refuse to be comforted. Till some length of time, had given vent to the excess of passion; and the consolations of religion, had stanched their bleeding woes. Then, the afflicted family search for the sentence, which fell *unfinished* from those loved, those venerable, and pious lips. They find it recorded by the prophet *Jeremiah*, containing the direction of infinite Wisdom, and the promise of unbounded Goodness; *leave thy fatherless children; I will preserve them alive; and let thy widows trust in me.** This, now, is the comfort of their life, and the joy of their heart. They treasure it up, in their memories. It is the best of *legacies*, and an *inexhaustible* fund. A fund, which will supply all their wants, by entailing the blessing of heaven, on all their honest labours.—They are rich; they are happy; in this sacred pledge of the Divine favor. They fear no evil; they want no good; because God is their portion, and their guardian God.

No sooner turned from one *momento* of my own, and memorial of another's decease, but a second, a third, a long succession of these melancholy monitors, croud upon my sight.—That which has fixed my observation, is one of a more *grave* and sable *aspect* than the former. I suppose, it preserves the relics of a more aged person. One would conjecture, that he made somewhat of a figure, in his station among the living; as his monument does among the funeral marbles. Let me draw near, and inquire of the

* Jerem. xlix. 11.

stone; "*who*, or *what*, is beneath its surface?"—I am informed, he was once the owner of a considerable estate; which was much improved, by his own application and management: that, he left the world in the busy period of life; advanced a little beyond the meridian.

PROBABLY, replied my musing mind, one of those *indefatigable drudges*, who rise early; late take rest; and eat the bread of carefulness; not to secure the loving-kindness of the LORD: not to make provision for any reasonable necessity: but only to *amass* together ten thousand times more, than they can possibly *use*.—Did he not lay schemes for enlarging his fortune, and aggrandizing his family? Did he not purpose to join field to field, and add house to house; till his possessions were almost as vast as his desires? That, then, he would sit down, and enjoy what he had acquired; breathe a while from his toilsome pursuit of things temporal, and, perhaps, think a little of things eternal.

BUT see the folly of *worldly wisdom!* How silly, how childish, is the sagacity of (what is called) manly and masterly prudence; when it contrives more solicitously for TIME, than it provides for ETERNITY! How strangely infatuated are those subtil heads; which weary themselves, in concerting measures for *phantoms* of a *day;* and scarce bestow a thought, on *everlasting realities!*—When every wheel moves on smoothly; when all the well-disposed designs are ripening apace for execution; and the long expected crisis of enjoyment seems to approach; behold! GOD from on high, laughs at the *Babel-builder.* Death touches the bubble; and it breaks; it drops into nothing. The cobweb, most finely spun indeed, but more easily dislodged, is swept away in an instant; and all the abortive projects are buried, in the same grave with their projector. So true is that verdict, which the Wisdom from above passes, on these *successful unfortunates:* "they walk in a vain "shadow, and disquiet themselves in vain."*

* Psal. xxxix. 6.

SPEAK, ye that attended such a one in his last minutes; ye that heard his *expiring sentiments;* did he not cry out, in the language of disappointed sensuality—" O death! " how terrible is thy approach, to a man immersed in se- " cular cares, and void of all concern for the never-ending " *hereafter!* Where, alas! is the profit, where the com- " fort, of entering deep into the knowledge, and of being " dexterous in the dispatch, of earthly affairs; since I have, " all the while, neglected *the one thing needful!* destruc- " tive mistake! I have been attentive to every inferior in- " terest; I have laid myself out on the trifles of a moment; " but have disregarded *heaven;* have forgot *eternal ages!* " O! that my days"—here he was going on to breathe some fruitless wishes; or to form, I know not what, ineffectual resolutions. But a sudden convulsion shook his nerves; disabled his tongue; and in less than an hour, dissolved his frame.

MAY the children of this world be warned, by the dying words of an unhappy brother; and gather advantage, from his misfortune.—Why should they pant, with such impatient ardor, after *white* and *yellow* earth; as if the universe did not afford sufficient, for every one to take a little? Why should they *lade* themselves with thick clay; when they are to " *run* for an incorruptible crown, and press to- " wards the prize of their high Calling?" Why should they overload the vessel, in which their everlasting ALL is embarked; or fill their arms with *superfluities,* when they are to swim for their *lives?*—Yet, so preposterous is the conduct of those persons, who are *all industry,* to heap up an abundance of the wealth which perisheth; but are scarce so much as *faintly desirous,* of being rich towards GOD.

O! that we may walk, through all these glittering toys, at least with a wise indifference, if not with a superior disdain! Having enough for the conveniencies of life, let us only *accommodate* ourselves with things below, and lay up our *treasures* in the regions above.—Whereas, if we indulge an anxious concern, or lavish an inordinate care, on any transitory possessions; we shall rivet them to our affections with so firm an union, that the utmost severity of pain must attend the separating stroke. By such an eager attachment, to what will certainly be ravished from us; we

shall only insure to ourselves *accumulated anguish*, against the agonizing hour. We shall plant, afore-hand, our dying pillow with thorns.*

SOME, I perceive, arrived at threescore years and ten, before they made their exit; nay, some few resigned not their breath, till they had numbered fourscore revolving harvests. These, I would hope, "remembered their Creator in the days of their youth;" before their strength became labour and sorrow:—before that low ebb of languishing nature, when *the keepers of the house tremble, and those that look out of the windows are darkened:*† when even the lighting down of *the grasshopper, is a burden* on the bending shoulders; *and desire* itself *fails* in the listless, lethargic soul:—before those heavy hours come, and those tiresome moments draw nigh; in which, there is too much reason to say, "*we have no pleasure in them;* no improvement from them."

IF their lamps were unfurnished with oil; how unfit must they be, in such decrepid circumstances, to go to the market, and buy!‡ For, besides a variety of disorders, arising from the enfeebled constitution; their corruptions must be surprisingly strengthened, by such a long course of irreligion. *Evil habits* must have struck the deepest root; must have twisted themselves with every fibre of the heart; and be as thoroughly ingrained in the disposition as the soot in the *Etheopian's* complexion, or the spots in the leopard's skin. If such a one, under such disadvantages, surmounts all the difficulties, which lie in his way to glory; it must be a great and mighty salvation indeed. If such a one escapes destruction, and is saved at the last, it must, without all peradventure, be—*so as by fire.*§

* Lean not on earth; 'twill pierce thee to the heart;
A broken reed at best, but oft a spear:
On its sharp point peace bleeds, and hope expires.

Night Thoughts, No. III.

† *Eccles.* xii. 3, 5. I need not remind my reader, that, by the former of these figurative expressions, is signified the *enervated* state of the *hands* and *arms;* by the latter, the *dimness* of the eyes, or the total *loss of sight:* that, taken in connection with other parts of the chapter, they exhibit, in a series of bold and lively metaphors, a description of the *various infirmities* attendant on old age.

‡ Matt. xxv. 9.

§ 1 Cor. iii. 15.

This is the season, which stands in need of *comfort;* and is very improper, to enter upon the *conflict.* The husbandman should now be putting in his sickle, or eating the fruit of his labours; not beginning to break up the ground, or scatter the seed.—Nothing, 'tis true, is impossible with God: He said, *let there be light, and there was light:* instantaneous light, diffused, as quick as thought, through all the dismal dominion of primeval darkness. At his command, a leprosy of the longest continuance, and of the utmost inveteracy, departs in a moment. He can, in the greatness of his strength, quicken the wretch, who has lain dead in trespasses and sins, not four days only but fourscore years.—Yet trust not, O trust not, a point of such *inexpressible* importance, to so dreadful an *uncertainty.* God may suspend his power; may withdraw his help; may swear in his wrath, that such abuses of his long-suffering shall "never enter into his rest."

Ye therefore, that are *vigorous* in health, and *blooming* in years, improve the precious opportunity. Improve your golden hours, to the noblest of all purposes: such as may render you meet, for the inheritance of saints in light; and ascertain your title, to a state of immortal youth, to a crown of eternal glory.*—Stand not, all the prime of your day, idle: trifle no longer with the offers of this immense felicity, but make haste, and delay not the time, to keep God's commandments. While you are loitering in a *gay insensibility,* death may be bending his bow, and marking you out for speedy victims.—Not long ago, I happened to spy a thoughtless *jay.* The poor bird was idly busied, in dressing his pretty plumes; or hopping carelessly from spray to spray. A sportsman, coming by, observes the feathered rover. Immediately he lifts the tube, and levels his blow. Swifter than whirlwind, flies the leaden death; and, in a

* May I be permitted to recommend, as a treasure of inestimable value, and a treatise particularly apposite to my subject, Dr. LUCAS's INQUIRY AFTER HAPPINESS? That part especially, which displays the method, and enumerates the advantages, of *improving life, or living much in a little time.* Chap. III. p. 258. of the 6th Edit.——An *author;* in whom the gentleman, the sholar, and the christian, are most happily united. A *performance;* which, in point of solid argument, unaffected piety, and a vein of thought amazingly fertile has, perhaps, no superior. Nor can I wish my reader a more refined pleasure, or a more substantial happiness, than that of having the sentiments of this entertaining and pathetic writer, wove into the very texture of his heart.

moment, lays the silly creature, breathless on the ground. Such, *such may* be the fate of the man, who has a fair occasion of obtaining grace to-day; and wantonly postpones the improvement of it, till to-morrow. He may be cut off, in the midst of his folly, and ruined *for ever*, while he is dreaming of being *wise hereafter*.

SOME, no doubt, came to this their last retreat, *full of piety*, and *full of days*; "as a shock of corn, ripe with age, "and laden with plenty, cometh in, in his season."*— These were children of light, and *wise* in their generation. Wise with that exalted wisdom, which cometh from above; and with that enduring wisdom, which lasts to eternity.— *Rich* also they were, more honorably and permanently rich, than all the votaries of Mammon. The wealth of the *one* has made itself wings, and is irrecoverably gone. While the wretched acquirers are transmitted, to that place of penury and pain; where, not so much as one drop of water is allowed, to cool their scorched tongues. The stores of the *other* still abide with them; will never depart from them; but make them glad, for ever and ever, in the city of their GOD. Their treasures were such, as no created power could *take away*; such as none but infinite Beneficence can *bestow*; and (comfortable to consider!) such as I, and every indigent longing sinner, may *obtain*; treasures of heavenly knowledge, and saving faith; treasures of atoning blood, and imputed righteousness.

HERE † lie their bodies in "peaceable habitations, and "quiet resting-places." Here, they have thrown off every *burden*, and are escaped from every *snare*. The head

* Job v 26

† Some, I know, are offended at our burying corpse within the church, and exclaim against it, as a very great *impropriety* and *indecency*. But this, I imagine, proceeds from an extensive and mistaken delicacy If proper care be taken to secure from injury, the *foundations* of the *building*; and to prevent the exhalation of any *noxious effluvia*, from the putrefying flesh; I cannot discover any inconveniencies, attending this practice

The notion, that noisome carcasses (as they are called) are very unbecoming a place consecrated to religious purposes, seems to be derived from the *antiquated Jewish* canon Whereby it was declared, that a dead body imparted defilement to the person, who touched it, and polluted the spot, where it was lodged. On which account, the *Jews* were scrupulously careful, to have their sepulchres built at a distance from their houses, and made it a point of conscience, not to suffer burial places to subsist in the city But, as this was a rite purely *ceremonial*; it seems to be intirely superseded by the *gospel* dispensation

aches no more; the eye forgets to weep; the flesh is no longer racked with acute, nor wasted with lingering distempers. Here, they receive a final release from pain, and an everlasting discharge from sorrow. Here, danger never threatens them, with her terrifying alarms; but *tranquillity* softens their couch, and *safety* guards their repose. Rest then, ye precious relics, within this hospitable gloom.—Rest in gentle slumbers, till the last trumpet shall give the welcome signal; and sound aloud, through all your silent mansions, "arise! shine; for your light is come, and the "glory of the Lord is risen upon you."*

To these, how *calm* was the *evening* of life! in what a smiling serenity, did their sun go down! when their flesh and their heart failed, how reviving was the remembrance of an all sufficient Redeemer; once dying for *their* sins, now risen again for *their* justification! How chearing the well-grounded hope of pardon for their transgressions, and peace with God, through Jesus Christ our Lord! How did this *asswage* the agonies, and *sweeten* the bitterness of death?—Where now is wealth, with all her golden mountains? where is honor, with her proud trophies of renown? where are all the vain pomps of a deluded world? can they inspire *such* comfort, can they administer *any* support in this last extremity? Can *they* compose the affrighted thoughts; or buoy up the departing soul, amidst all the pangs of dissolution?—The followers of the Lamb seem pleased and triumphant, even at their last gasp. "God's

I cannot forbear thinking, that under the christian oeconomy, there is a propriety and usefulness in the custom. *Usefulness*, because it must render our solemn assemblies more venerable and awful. For, when we walk over the dust of our friends, or kneel upon the ashes of our relations; this awakening circumstance must strike a lively impression of our own mortality. And what consideration can be more effectual, to make us serious and attentive in hearing; earnest and importunate in praying?

As for the *fitness* of the usage, it seems perfectly suitable to the design of those sacred edifices. They are set apart for God; not only to receive his worshipers, but to preserve the furniture for holy ministrations, and what is, in a peculiar manner, appropriated to the Divine Majesty. Are not the bodies of the saints the Almighty's property? Were they not once the objects of his *tender love*? Are they not still the subjects of his *special care*? Has he not given commandment concerning the bones of his elect; and charged the ocean, and enjoined the grave, to keep them until *that day*? When rocks bright with gems, or mountains rich with mines, are abandoned to the devouring flames; will not *these* be rescued from the fiery ruin? Will not *these* be translated into Jehovah's kingdom, and, conjointly with the soul, made "his jewels," made "his peculiar treasure," made to shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever?

* Isia. lx. 1.

"everlasting arms are underneath"* their fainting heads. His spirit whispers peace and consolation to their consciences. In the strength of these heavenly succours, they quit the field, not *captives*, but *conquerors;* with "hopes full "of immortality."

And now they are gone.—The struggles of reluctant nature are over. The body sleeps in death: the soul launches into the invisible state.—But, who can imagine the delightful surprise, when they find themselves surrounded by *guardian angels* instead of *weeping friends?* How securely do they wing their way, and pass through unknown worlds, under the conduct of those celestial guides!—The vale of tears is quite lost. Farewell, for ever, the realms of woe, and range of malignant beings! They arrive on the *frontiers* of inexpressible *felicity.* They "are come to the city of the living God:" while a voice, sweeter than music in her softest strains; sweet as the harmony of hymning seraphim; congratulates their arrival, and bespeaks their admission: *lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors;* that the heirs of glory may enter in.

Here, then, let us leave the spirits and souls of the righteous; escaped from an entangling *wilderness*, and received into a *paradise* of delights! Escaped from the territories of disquietude, and settled in regions of unmolested security! Here, they sit down with *Abraham, Isaac,* and *Jacob,* in the kingdom of their Father. Here, they mingle with an innumerable company of angels, and rejoice around the throne of the Lamb: rejoice in the *fruition* of *present* felicity, and in the *assured expectation* of an inconceivable addition to their bliss; when *GOD shall call the heavens from above, and the earth, that he may judge his people.*†

* Deut xxxiii. 27.

† *Seneca's* Reflections, upon the State of holy Souls, delivered from the burden of flesh, are sparkling and fine, yet very *indistinct* and *empty*, compared with the particulars mentioned above, and with many others, that might be collected from scripture. In a sea of troubles, and amidst all the cares to which we are exposed during our voyage, we have no haven but death. Envy not, therefore, your brother, he is at rest,—at length he is free, he is secure from dangers, at last he is eternal, now he may enjoy a free and unbounded heaven; and from his humble, and depressed state, he may shine forth in that place, which receives the spirits released from earthly bondage in its happy bosom, and a new nature enjoys every good thing without alloy

Fools *accounted their life madness, and their end to be without honor: but, they are numbered among the children of GOD; and their lot,* their distinguished and eternal lot, *is among the saints!** However, therefore, an undiscerning world may *despise*, and profane world *vilify*, the truly religious; be this the supreme, the invariable desire of my heart! "let me live the life, and die the death, of the "righteous. Oh! let my latter end, and future state be "like theirs!"

What figure is that, which strikes my eye, from an eminent part of the wall? it is not only placed in a more *elevated situation*, than the rest; but carries a more splendid and sumptuous air, than ordinary. Swords and spears; murdering engines, and instruments of slaughter; adorn the stone with a formidable magnificence. It proves to be the monument of a noble warrior.

Is such respect, thought I, paid to the memory of this brave soldier, for sacrificing his life to the *public good?*— Then, what honors, what immortal honors, are due to the great Captain of our Salvation? Who, though Lord of the angelic legions; and supreme commander of all the heavenly Hosts; willingly offered himself a *bleeding* propitiation for *Sinners!*

The one died, being a *mortal;* and only yielded up a life, which was long before forfeited up to Divine Justice; which must soon have been surrendered as a debt to nature, if it had not fallen as a prey to war.—But Christ took flesh, and gave up the Ghost, though he was the great I AM; the Fountain of Existence; who calls happiness and immortality all his own. He, who thought it no robbery to be *equal with God;* he, whose outgoings were *from everlasting;* even he, was made in the likeness of man, and cut off out of the land of the living. Wonder, O Heavens! Be astonished, O Earth! HE died the death, of whom it is witnessed, that he is "the true God, and eternal life.†"

* Wisdom v. 4, 5. † 1 John v. 20.

The one *exposed* himself to peril, in the service of his *Sovereign* and his *Country;* which, though it was glorious to do, yet would have been ignominious, in such circumstances, to have declined.—But Christ took the field, though he was the *blessed* and *only Potentate;* the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. Christ took the field, though he was *sure* to *drop* in the engagement; and put on the harness, though he knew beforehand, that it must reek with his blood. That Prince of Heaven resigned his royal person, not barely to the hazard, but to the inevitable stroke; to death, certain in its approach, and armed with all its horrors.—And for *whom?* Not for those who were in any degree deserving; but for his own *disobedient creatures;* for the pardon of condemned malefactors; for a band of rebels, a race of traitors, the most obnoxious and inexcusable of all criminals. Whom he might have left to perish in their iniquities, without the least impeachment of his goodness, and to the display of his avenging justice.

The one, 'tis probable, died *expeditiously;* was suddenly wounded, and soon slain. A bullet, lodged in his heart; a sword, sheathed in his breast; or a battle-ax, cleaving the brain; might put a speedy end to his misery; dispatch him "as in a moment."—Whereas, the divine Redeemer expired in tedious and protracted torments. His pangs were as *lingering*, as they were *exquisite*. Even in the prelude to his last suffering, what a load of sorrows overwhelmed his sacred humanity; till the intolerable pressure wrung blood, instead of sweat, from every pore: till the crimson flood stained all his raiment, and tinged the very stones.—But, when the last scene of the tragedy commenced; when the executioner's hammer, had nailed him to the cross; O! how many *dismal hours*, did that illustrious sufferer hang; a spectacle of woe to God, to angels, and to men! his temples mangled with the thorny crown! his hands and feet cleft with the rugged irons! his whole body covered with wounds and bruises! and his soul, his very soul, pierced with pangs of unutterable distress!

So long he hung, that nature, through all her dominions, was thrown into sympathizing commotions. The *earth* could no longer sustain such barbarous indignities, without trembling; nor the *sun* behold them without horror. Nay,

so long did he hang in this extremity of agony and torture, that the alarm reached even the remote *regions* of the dead. Never, O my soul, never forget the amazing truth. The Lamb of God was seized; was bound; was slaughtered with the utmost inhumanity; and endured death, in all its bitterness, for thee. His murderers, studiously cruel, so guided the fatal cup; that he tasted *every drop* of its gall, before he drank it off to the *very dregs*.

Once again; the warrior died like a *hero*, and fell gallantly in the field of battle.—But, died not Christ *as a fool dieth?** not on the bed of honor, with scars of glory in his breast; but, like some execrable miscreant, on a *gibbet;* with lashes of the vile scourge on his back. Yes, the blessed Jesus bowed his expiring head on the accursed tree; suspended between heaven and earth, as an outcast from both, and unworthy of neither.

What suitable returns of inflamed and adoring devotion, can we make to the Holy One of God; thus dying, that we might live? dying in ignominy and anguish; that we might live for ever in the heights of joy, and sit forever on thrones of glory.—Alas! it is not in *us*, impotent, insensible mortals, to be duly thankful. *He* only, who confers such inconceivably rich favors, can enkindle a proper warmth of grateful affection. Then build thyself a *monument*, most gracious Immanuel, build thyself an everlasting monument of *gratitude* in our souls. Inscribe the memory of thy matchless beneficence, not with ink and pen; but with that precious *blood*, which gushed from thy wounded veins. Engrave it, not with the hammer and chizel; but with that sharpened *spear*, which pierced thy sacred side. Let it stand conspicuous and indellible, not on outward tables of stone; but on the very inmost *tables* of our *hearts*.

One thing more let me observe, before I bid adieu to this intombed warrior, and his garnished sepulchre. How mean are these ostentatious methods, of *bribing* the *vote* of fame, and purchasing a little posthumous renown! what

* 2 *Sam.* iii. 33 Of this indignity our Lord complains; *are ye come out as against a thief?* Matt. xxvi. 55

a poor substitute for a set of memorable actions, is polished alabaster, or the mimicry of sculptured marble! the real excellency of this bleeding patriot,* is written on the minds of his countrymen. It would be remembered with applause, so long as the nation subsists, without this artificial expedient to perpetuate it.—And such, such is the monument, I would wish for myself. Let me leave a memorial, in the breasts of my fellow-creatures. Let surviving friends bear witness; that I have not lived to myself alone, nor been altogether unserviceable in my generation. O! let an uninterrupted series of beneficent offices, be the *inscription;* and the best interests of my acquaintance, the *plate* that exhibits it.

Let the *poor*, as they pass by my grave, point at the little spot, and thankfully acknowledge—" There lies the " man, whose unwearied kindness was the constant relief " of my various distresses; who tenderly visited my languishing bed, and readily supplied my indigent circumstances. How often were his counsels, a guide to my " perplexed thoughts, and a cordial to my dejected spirits! " 'Tis owing to God's blessing, on his seasonable charities, " and prudent consolations; that I now live, and live in " comfort."—Let a person, once *ignorant* and *ungodly*, lift up his eyes to heaven, and say within himself, as he walks over my bones; " here are the last remains of that sincere " friend, who *watched for my soul.* I can never forget, " with what heedless gaiety, I was posting on in the paths " of perdition: and I tremble to think, into what irretrievable ruin I might quickly have been plunged; had not " his faithful admonitions arrested me in the wild career. " I was unacquainted with the gospel of peace, and had no

* Sir *Bevil Granville*, slain in the civil wars, at an engagement with the rebels.—It may possibly be some entertainment to the reader, if I subjoin Sir *Bevil's* character; as it is drawn by that celebrated pen, which wrote the history of those calamitous times.—" That " which would have clouded any victory, *says the noble historian*, and made the loss of " others less spoken of, was the death of Sir *Bevile Granville*. He was indeed an excellent person, whose activity, interest, and reputation, were the foundation of what had " been done in *Cornwall*; his temper and affections so public, that no accident which happened, could make any impression upon him; and his example kept others from taking " any thing ill, or at least seeming to do so. In a word, a brighter courage, and a gentler disposition, were never married together, to make the most cheerful and innocent " conversation."

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" concern for its unsearchable treasures; but now enlight-
" ened by his *instructive conversation*, I see the all-suffi-
" ciency of my Saviour; and, animated by his *repeated ex-
" hortations*, I count all things but loss, that I may win
" CHRIST." Methinks, his discourses, seasoned with reli-
" gion, and set home by the divine spirit, still tingle in my
" ears; are still warm upon my heart; and, I trust, will
" be more and more operative, till we meet each other in
" the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

THE only *infallible* way of immortalizing our characters; a way equally open to the meanest and most exalted fortune; is, "to make our calling and election sure"; to gain some sweet evidence, that our *names are written in Heaven.* Then, however they may be disregarded or forgotten, among men; they will not fail to be had in everlasting remembrance, before the Lord —This is, of all distinctions, far the noblest. *Ambition*, be this thy object, and every page of scripture will sanctify thy passion; even Grace itself will fan thy flame.—As to earthly memorials, yet a little while, and they are all obliterated. The tongue of those whose happiness we have zealously promoted, must soon be silent in the coffin. Characters cut with a pen of iron, and committed to the solid rock, will ere long cease to be legible.* But as many as are inrolled "in the lamb's book of life," he himself declares, shall never be blotted out from those annals of eternity.† When a flight of years has moulded the triumphal column into dust; when the brazen statue perishes, under the corroding hand of time: those honors still continue; still are blooming and incorruptible in the world of glory.

Make the extended skies your tomb,
Let stars record your worth:
Yet know, vain mortals, all must die
As nature's sickliest birth.

* Destiny also is consigned to the tombs themselves

Would bounteous heav'n indulge my pray'r,
I frame a nobler choice;
Nor, living, wish the pompous pile;
Nor, dead, regret the loss.

In thy fair *book of life* divine,
My GOD, inscribe my name:
There let it fill fome humble place,
Beneath the slaughtered Lamb.

Thy saints, while ages roll away,
In endless fame survive;
Their glories, o'er the wrongs of time,
Greatly triumphant live.

YONDER entrance leads, I suppose, to the *vault*. Let me turn aside, and take one view of the habitation, and its tenants.—The sullen *door* grates upon its hinges: not used to receive many visitants, it admits me with reluctance and murmurs.—What meaneth this *sudden trepidation;* while I descend the steps, and am visiting the pale nations of the dead?—Be composed, my spirits; there is nothing to fear, in these quiet chambers. "Here, even the wicked cease "from troubling."

GOOD heavens! what a solemn scene!—How dismal the *gloom!* Here is perpetual darkness, and night even at noon-day.—How doleful is *solitude!* not one trace of chearful society; but sorrow and terror seem to have made this, their united abode—Hark! how the hollow dome resounds, at every tread. The *echoes*, that long have slept, are awakened; and lament, and sigh, along the walls.

A BEAM, or two, finds its way through the grates; and reflects a feeble glimmer, from the nails of the *coffins*. So many of those sad spectacles, half concealed in shades; half seen dimly by the baleful twilight; add a deeper horror to these gloomy mansions.—I pore upon the inscriptions, and am just able to pick out; that these are the remains of the rich and renowned. No vulgar dead are deposited here. The *most illustrious* and *right honorable*, have claimed this for their last retreat. And, indeed, they retain somewhat

of a shadowy pre-eminence. They lie ranged in mournful order, and in a sort of silent pomp, under the arches of an ample sepulchre: while meaner corpses, without much ceremony, "go down to the stones of the pit."

My apprehensions recover from their surprise. I find, here are no phantoms, but such as fear raises.—However, it still amazes me, to observe the wonders of this nether world. Those, who received vast revenues, and called whole lordships their own, are here reduced to half a dozen feet of earth, or confined in a few *sheets* of *lead*. Rooms of state, and sumptuous furniture, are resigned, for no other ornament than the shroud, for no other apartment than the darksome *niche*.—Where is the star, that blazed upon the breast; or coronet, that glittered round the temples? The only remains of departed dignity are, the weather-beaten hatchment, and the tattered escutcheon. I see no splendid retinue, surrounding this solitary dwelling.—The lordly equipage hovers no longer about the lifeless master! He has no other attendant, than a dusty *statue*; which, while the regardless world is as gay as ever, the sculptor's hand has taught to weep.

Those, who gloried in high-born ancestors, and noble *pedigree*; here drop their lofty pretensions. They acknowledge kindred with creeping things, and *quarter arms* with the meanest reptiles. *They say to corruption, thou art my father; and to the worm, thou art my mother and my sister.*—Or, should they still assume the stile of distinction, ah! how impotent were the claim! how apparent the ostentation! Is it said by their monument, HERE LIES THE GREAT? how easily is it replied by the spectator!

——— *False marble! where?*
Nothing but poor and sordid dust lies here.

Mortifying truth! sufficient, one would think, to wean the most sanguine appetite, from this transitory state of things; from its sickly satisfactions, its fading glories, its vanishing treasures.

For now, ye *lying vanities* of life!
Ye ever tempting, ever-cheating train!
Where are ye NOW? and what is your amount?

WHAT is all the world, to these poor breathless beings? —What are their *pleasures?* a bubble broke.—What their *honors?* a dream that is forgotten.—What the sum-total of their *enjoyments* below? once, perhaps, it appeared to inexperienced and fond desire, something considerable. But, now death has measured it with his line, and weighed it in his scale, what is the upshot? Alas! it is shorter than a span; lighter than the dancing spark; and driven away like the dissolving smoke.

INDULGE my soul, a serious pause. Recollect all the *gay things*, that were wont to dazzle thy eyes, and inveigle thy affections. Here, examine those baits of sense. Here, form an estimate of their *real value.* Suppose thyself first, among the favourites of fortune; who revel in the lap of pleasure; who shine in the robes of honor; and swim in tides of inexhausted riches. Yet, how soon would the passing bell proclaim thy exit! and, when once that iron call, has summoned thee to thy future reckoning; where would all these gratifications be? at that period, how will all the pageantry of the most affluent, splendid, or luxurious circumstances, vanish into empty air!—And is *this* a happiness so passionately to be coveted?

I THANK you, ye relics of sounding titles, and magnificent names. Ye have taught me more of the littleness of the world, than all the volumes of my library. Your nobility arrayed in a winding-sheet; your grandeur mouldering in an urn; are the most indisputable proofs, of the *nothingness* of created things. Never, surely, did Providence write this important point, in such legible characters; as in the ashes of *my lord*, or on the corpse of *his grace*.*—Let others, if they please, pay their obsequious court to your wealthy sons; and ignobly fawn, or anxiously sue, for preferments. My thoughts shall often resort, in pensive contemplation, to the sepulchres of their sires; and learn, from their sleeping dust—to *moderate* my expectations from mortals—to stand *disengaged* from every undue attachment, to the little interests of time—to get above the delusive amusements of honor; the gaudy tinsels of wealth; and all the empty shadows of a perishing world.

* Death alone, confesses how insignificant are the atoms of men!

HARK! what *sound* is that!—In such a situation, every noise alarms.—Solemn and slow, it breaks again upon the silent air.—'Tis the striking of the clock.—Designed, one would imagine, to ratify all my serious meditations. Methinks, it says *amen*, and sets a seal to every improving hint. It tells me; that another portion of my appointed time, is elapsed. One calls it, "the knell of my departed hours." 'Tis the watch-word to vigilance and activity It cries in the ear of reason; "Redeem the time. Catch "the favourable *gales* of *opportunity*; O! catch them, "while they breath; before they are irrecoverably lost. "The span of life shortens continually. Thy minutes are "all upon the wing, and hastening to be gone. Thou art "a borderer upon eternity; and making incessant advances "to the state thou art contemplating." May the admonition sink deep, into an attentive and obedient mind! May it teach me that *heavenly arithmetic*, of "numbering "my days, and applying my heart unto wisdom!"

I HAVE often walked, beneath the impending promontory's craggy cliff; I have sometimes trod the vast spaces of the lonely desart; and penetrated the inmost recesses of the dreary cavern: but never, never beheld nature louring, with so *tremendous* a form; never felt such impressions of *awe*, striking cold on my heart; as under these black-browed arches, amidst these mouldy walls, and surrounded by such rueful objects. Where melancholy, deepest melancholy, for ever spreads her raven wings.—Let me now emerge from the damp and dreadful obscurity.—Farewell, ye seats of desolation, and shades of death! Gladly I revisit the realms of day.

HAVING cast a *superficial* view, upon these receptacles of the dead; curiosity prompts my inquiry to a more *intimate* survey. Could we draw back the covering of the tomb; could we discern, what those are now, who once were mortals—O! how would it surprise, and grieve us! *Surprise* us, to behold the prodigious transformation, which has taken place on every individual; *grieve* us, to observe the dishonor done to our nature in general, within these subterraneous lodgements.

HERE, the sweet and winning *aspect*, that wore perpetually an attractive smile; grins horribly a naked, ghastly

skull.--The *eye*, that outshone the diamond's brilliancy; and glanced its lovely lightning, into the most guarded heart: alas! where is it? where shall we find the rolling sparkler? how are all its sprightly beams eclipsed! totally eclipsed!--The *tongue*, that once commanded all the power of eloquence, in this strange land has "forgot its cunning." Where are now those strains of harmony, which ravished our ears? Where is that flow of persuasion, which carried captive our judgements? The great master of language and of song, is become silent as the night that surrounds him. --The pampered *flesh*, so lately clothed in purple and fine linen, how is it covered rudely with clods of clay! There was a time, when the timorosly nice creature, would scarce "* adventure to set a foot upon the ground, for delicateness "and tenderness;" but is now enwrapped in clammy earth, and sleeps on no softer a pillow than the ragged gravel-stones.—Here, "the *strong men* bow themselves." The nervous arm is unstrung; the brawny sinews are relaxed; the limbs, not long ago the seats of vigour and activity, lie down motionless, and the bones, which were as bars of iron, are crumbled into dust.

HERE, the *man of business* forgets all his favourite schemes, and discontinues the pursuit of gain. Here, is a total stand to the circulation of merchandize, and the hurry of trade In these solitary recesses; as in the building of *Solomon's* temple; is heard no sound of the hammer and ax. The winding-sheet and the coffin, are the utmost bound of all earthly devices. "Hitherto may they go, but no farther." —Here, the *sons* of *pleasure* take a final farewel, of their dear delights. No more is the sensualist anointed with oil, or crowned with rose-buds. He chants no more, to the melody of the viol; nor revels any longer at the banquet of wine. Instead of sumptuous tables, and delicious treats, the poor voluptuary is himself a feast for fattened insects; the reptile riots in his flesh; "the worm feeds sweetly on him"—Here also, *beauty* fails; bright beauty drops her lustre here. O! how her roses fade, and her lillies languish, in this bleak soil! How does the grand leveller pour con-

* Deut. xxviii 56.

tempt, upon the charmer of our hearts! How turn to deformity, what captivated the world before!

Could the *lover* have a sight of his once enchanting fair-one; what a startling astonishment would seize him!—"Is
"this the object, I not long ago so passionately admired!
"I said, she was divinely fair; and thought her, somewhat
"more than mortal. Her form, was symmetry itself;
"every elegance breathed in her air; and all the graces
"waited on her motions.—'Twas music, when she spoke:
"but, when she spoke encouragement, 'twas little less
"than rapture. How my heart danced, to those charming
"accents!—And can that, which, some weeks ago, was
"to admiration *lovely*, be now so insufferably *loathsome*?
"—Where are those blushing cheeks? Where the coral
"lips? Where that ivory neck, on which the curling jet,
"in such glossy ringlets, flowed? With a thousand other
"beauties of person, and ten thousand delicacies of
"action*?—Amazing alteration! Delusory bliss!—Fondly I
"gazed upon the glittering *meteor*. It shone brightly, and
"I mistook it for a *star*; for a permanent and substantial
"good. But how is it fallen! fallen from an orb, not its
own! And all that I can trace on earth, is but a *putrid*
"*mass*."

Lie, poor *Florella!* lie deep, as thou dost, in obscure darkness. Let night, with her impenetrable shades, always conceal thee. May no prying eye, be witness to thy disgrace: but let thy *surviving sisters*, think upon thy state; when they contemplate, the idol in the glass. When the pleasing image rises gracefully to view, surrounded with a world of charms; and flushed with joy, at the consciousness of them all—Then, in those minutes of temptation and danger, when vanity uses to steal into the thoughts—Then, let them remember, what a *veil of horror* is drawn over a face; which was once beautiful and brilliant, as theirs. Such a seasonable reflection, might regulate the labours of the toilet; and create a more earnest solicitude, to polish the *jewel*, than to varnish the *casket*. It might then become their highest ambition, to have the mind

* Where are the graces fled, where is that complexion, where that elegance of gesture, what [illegible]?

decked with divine virtues; and dressed after the amiable pattern of theit Redeemer's holiness.

And would this prejudice their persons, or depreciate their charms?—Quite the reverse! It would spread a sort of heavenly glory, over the finest *set of features;* and heighten the loveliness of every other engaging accomplishment.—What is yet a more inviting consideration; these flowers would not wither with nature, nor be tarnished by time; but would open continually into richer beauties, and *flourish* even in the *winter* of age.—But, the most incomparable recommendation of these noble qualities, is; that, from their hallowed relics, as from the fragrant ashes of the *Phœnix*, will ere long arise an illustrious form; bright, as the wings of angels; lasting, as the light of the new *Jerusalem.*

For my part; the remembrance of this sad revolution, shall make me *ashamed* to pay my *devotion*, to a shrine of perishing flesh; and *afraid*, to expect *all* my happiness, from so brittle a joy. It shall teach me, not to think too highly of well-proportioned clay; though formed in the most elegant mould, and animated with the sweetest soul. 'Tis Heaven's last, best, and crowning gift; to be received with *gratitude*, and cherished with *love*, as a most valuable blessing; not worshipped, with the incense of *flattery*, and strains of fulsome *adoration*, as a Goddess.—It will cure, I trust, the *dotage* of my *eyes:* and incline me always to prefer the substantial "ornaments, of a meek and virtuous "spirit: before the transient decorations, of white and red on the skin.

Here, I called in my roving meditations, from their long excursion on this tender subject. Fancy listened a while, to the soliloquy of a lover; but now judgement resumes the reins, and guides my thoughts to more near and self-interesting enquiries.—However, upon a review of the whole scene; crouded with *spectacles* of *mortality*, and *trophies* of *death;* I could not forbear smiting my breast, and fetching a sigh, and lamenting over the noblest of all visible Beings, lying in ruins under the feet of "the *pale horse* "*and his rider* *." I could not forbear that pathetic ex-

* Rev. vi 8

clamation, "*O! thou* † *Adam, what hast thou done!*" what desolation has thy disobedience wrought in the earth! Oh! the ruinous, the transcendent *malignity* of *Sin!* Sin has demolished so many stately structures of flesh: Sin has made such havock, among the most excellent ranks of God's lower creation: and Sin, (that deadly bane of our nature) would have plunged our better part, into the execrable horrors of the nethermost hell; had not our merciful Mediator interposed, and given himself for our ransom.—Therefore, what grateful acknowledgements, does the whole *world* of *penitent* sinners owe; what ardent returns of love, will a whole *Heaven* of *glorified* believers pay; to such a friend, benefactor, and deliverer!

Musing upon these melancholy objects, a faithful remembrancer suggests from within.—"Must this sad *change* "succeed in *me* also? Am I to draw my last gasp; to become a breathless corpse; and *be*, what I *deplore?** Is "there a time approaching, when this body shall be carried out upon the bier, and consigned to its clay cold "bed? while some kind acquaintance, perhaps, may let "fall one parting tear; and cry, alas! my brother!"——Nothing is more certain. A decree, much surer than the law of the *Medes* and *Persians*, has irrecoverably determined the doom

Should one of these ghastly figures, burst from his confinement; and start up, in frightful deformity, before me—should the *haggered skeleton*, lift a clattering hand; and point it full in my view—should it open the stiffened jaws; and, with a horse tremendous murmer, break this profound silence—should it accost *me* as *Samuel's* apparition addressed the trembling King—"*The* Lord *shall deliver* thee "*also into the hands of death. Yet a little while, and* thou "*shalt be with me**."—The *solemn warning*, delivered in so striking a manner, must strongly impress my imagination.

† 2 Esdr. vii. 48.

* I pass, with melancholy state
By all these solemn heaps of fate,
And think, as soft and sad I tread,
Above the venerable dead,
" Time was, like me, they life possess'd;
" And time shall be, when I shall rest." Parn.

* 1 Sam. xxviii. 19.

A message in thunder, would scarce sink deeper—Yet, there is abundantly greater reason to be alarmed, by that express declaration of the LORD GOD Almighty, "*Thou shalt* "*surely die.*"—Well then, since sentence is passed, since I am a condemned man; and know not, when the dead warrant may arrive: let me die to *sin;* and die to the *world;* before I die beneath the stroke of a righteous GOD. Let me employ the little uncertain interval of respite from execution; in preparing for a happier state, and a better life. That, when the fatal moment comes, and I am commanded to shut my eyes, upon all things here below; I may open them again, to see my Saviour in the mansions above.

SINCE this body, which is so fearfully and wonderfully made, must fall to pieces in the grave; since I must soon resign all my bodily powers to darkness, inactivity, and corruption! oh! let it be my constant care, to *use* them well, while I *possess* them! let my *hands* be stretched forth to relieve the needy; and always be more "ready to *give*, than to *receive.*"—Let my *knees* bend, in deepest humiliation, before the throne of grace: while the *eyes* are cast down to the earth, in penitential confusion; or devoutly looking up to heaven, for pardoning mercy!—In every friendly interview, let the "*law of kindness* dwell on my "*lips;*" or rather, if the seriousness of my acquaintance permits, let the *gospel* of *peace* flow from my *tongue:* oh! that I might be enabled, in every public concourse, to lift up my voice like a trumpet; and pour abroad a more joyful sound than its most melodious accents, in proclaiming the glad tidings of free salvation.—Be shut, my *ears*, resolutely shut, against the malevolent whispers of slander, and the contagious breath of filthy talking: but be swift to hear, the instructions of wisdom; be *all attention*, when your REDEEMER speaks; imbibe the precious truths, and convey them carefully to the heart.—Carry me, my *feet*, to the temple of the LORD; to the beds of the sick; and houses of the poor.—May all my members, devoted intirely to my divine master, be the *willing instruments* of promoting his glory.

THEN, ye embalmers, you may spare your pains: these works of faith, and labours of love; *these*, shall be my *spices* and *perfumes*. Enwrapped in these, I would lay me gently down, and sleep sweetly in the blessed JESUS; hoping, that GOD will "give commandment concerning "my bones; and one day fetch them up from the dust, as *silver* from the *furnace*, purified, "I say not, seven times, "but seventy times seven."

HERE, my contemplation took wing; and, in an instant, alighted in the *garden*, adjoining to mount *Calvary*. Having viewed the abode of my deceased fellow-creatures; methought, I longed to see the place, where our LORD lay. And, oh! what a marvellous spectacle was once exhibited, in this memorable sepulchre! HE,* "who cloathes him-"self with *light*, as with a garment; and walks, upon the "*wings* of the wind;"† was pleased to wear the habiliments of *mortality*, and dwelt among the *prostrate* dead.—Who can repeat the wonderous truth, too often? who can dwell upon the transporting theme, too long? He, who sits *enthroned* in *glory*, and diffuses bliss among all the heavenly hosts; was once a *pale* and *bloody corpse*, and pressed this little spot.

O DEATH! how great was thy triumph, in that hour! never did thy gloomy realms contain such a prisoner before. —Prisoner did I say? no; he was *more than conqueror*.

* Darkness his curtains, and his bed the dust,
Tho' sun and stars are dust beneath his throne

Night Thoughts

† The sacred scriptures, speaking of the supreme Being, say—*He walketh upon the waves of the sea*, to denote his uncontroulable power, *Job* ix. 8.—*He walketh in the circuit of heaven*, to express the immensity of his presence. *Job* xxii. 14.—*He walketh upon the wings of the wind*, to signify the amazing swiftness of his operations, *Psal.* civ. 3.—In which last phrase, there is, I think, an elegance and emphasis, not taken notice of by our comme[illegible], and yet unequalled in any writer. —Not, he *flieth*; he *runneth*; but, he w[illegible] that, on the *very wings* of the wind: on the most impetuous of elements, rous[illegible] its utmost rage, and sweeping along with inconceivable rapidity. A *tumult* in natu[illegible] not to be described is the *composed* and *sedate work* of the DEITY. A *speed*, [illegible] be measured, is (with reverence I use the expression, and to comport with our low methods of conception) the *calm* and *majestic foot-pace* of JEHOVAH.——How *flat* are the following lines, even in the *great master* of lyric song,

More swift than the stag, more rapid than the clouds,
Borne forward by the north wind

when compared with this inimitable *stroke of divine poetry*!——He *walketh* upon the *wings* of the *wind*.

He arose, far more mightily than *Sampson*, from a transient slumber; broke down the gates, and demolished the strong holds, of those dark dominions.—And this, O mortals, this is your only *consolation* and *security*. JESUS has trod the dreadful path, and smoothed it for your passage —JESUS sleeping in the chambers of the tomb, has brightened the dismal mansion; and left an inviting odour, in those beds of dust. The dying Jesus (never let the comfortable truth depart from your minds! The dying JESUS) is your sure *protection*, your unquestionable *passport*, through the territories of the grave. Believe in him, and they shall prove a "highway to *Sion*;" shall transmit you safe to paradise. Believe in him; and you shall be no losers, but unspeakable gainers, by your dissolution. For, hear what the oracle of heaven says, upon this important point: *Whoso believeth in me, shall never die**.—What sublime, and emphatical language, is this! Thus much, at least, it must import:—"The nature of that last change, shall be sur-"prisingly altered, for the better. It shall no longer be "*inflicted*, as a punishment; but rather *vouchsafed*, as a "blessing:—To such persons, it shall come attended, "with such a train of benefits, as will render it a kind of "*happy impropriety*, to call it dying. Dying! No, 'tis "then they *truly* begin to *live*: Their exit, is the end of "their frailty, and their entrance upon perfection: their "last groan, is the prelude to life and immortality."

O YE *timorous souls*, that are terrified at the passing-bell; that turn pale, at the sight of an opened grave; and can scarce behold a coffin, or a skull, without a shuddering horror: Ye that are in *bondage* to the grisly tyrant, and tremble at the shaking of his iron rod; cry mightily, to the father of your spirits, for *faith* in his dear son. Faith, will free you from your slavery.† Faith, will

* John xi. 26.

† Death's terror is the mountain *faith* removes,
'Tis *faith* disarms destruction ——
Believe, and look with triumph on the tomb.

These and some other quotations, I am proud to borrow from *the Night-Thoughts*, especially from *night the fourth*: in which, energy of language, sublimity of sentiment, and the most exquisite beauties of poetry, are the *least* perfection to be admired almost every line glows with devotion; rises into the most exalted apprehensions of the adorable Re-

embolden you to tread on (this fiercest of) serpents. Old *Simeon*, clasping the child JESUS in the arms of his flesh, and the glorious mediator in the arms of his faith, departs with tranquillity and peace. That bitter persecutor *Saul*, having won CHRIST; being found in CHRIST; longs to be dismissed from cumbrous clay, and kindles into rapture at the prospect of dissolution. Methinks, I see another of Immanuel's followers,* trusting in his Saviour; leaning on his beloved; go down to the silent shades, with composure and alacrity. In this powerful name, an innumerable company of sinful creatures have set up their banners; and "overcome, through the blood of the lamb." Authorized by the captain of thy salvation, *thou* mayst play around the hole of the asp, and put thy undaunted hand on this cockatrice-den. Thou mayst † feel the viper fastening to thy mortal part, and *fear* no *evil:* thou shalt one day shake it off by a joyful resurrection, and *suffer* no *harm*.

RESURRECTION! that chearing word eases my mind of an anxious thought, and solves a most *momentous question*. I was going to ask, "wherefore do all these corpses lie "here, in this abject condition? is this their final state? "has death conquered? and will the tyrant hold captivity "captive? How long wilt thou forget them, O LORD? "for ever?"—No, saith the voice from heaven, the word of divine revelation; *the righteous* are all "*prisoners of* "*hope*."‡ There is an hour (an awful secret that, and known only to all-foreseeing wisdom,) an appointed hour there is, when an act of grace will pass the great seal above, and give them an universal discharge; a general delivery from the abodes of corruption. Then, shall the LORD JESUS descend from heaven, with the shout of the archangel, and the trump of GOD. *Destruction* itself shall hear the call, and the obedient *grave* give up her dead. In a

deemer; and is animated with the most lively faith, in his all-sufficient mediation. The author of this excellent performance has the peculiar felicity, of ennobling all the strength of style, and every delicacy of imagination, with the grand and momentous truths of christianity. These thoughts give the highest entertainment, to the fancy; and impart the noblest improvement, to the mind: they not only refine our taste, but prepare us for death, and ripen us for glory. I never take up this admirable piece, but am ready to cry out "Inspire me with such a spirit, and life shall be delightful, nor, death itself unwelcome."

* 2 Pet. i. 14. † Acts xxviii. 3, 5. ‡ Zech. ix. 12.

moment, in the twinkling of an eye, they shake off the sleep of ten thousand years; and spring forth like the bounding roe, to "meet their LORD in the air."

AND, oh! with what cordial congratulations; what transporting endearments; do the soul and body, those affectionate companions, re-unite! but, with how much greater demonstrations of kindness, are they *both* received, by their *compassionate Redeemer!* The Ancient of days, who comes in the clouds of heaven, is their friend; their father; their bridegroom. They have nothing to fear, from all the pomp of his appearance. Those *tremendous solemnities*, which spread desolation and astonishment thro' the universe; serve only to inflame their love, and heighten their hopes. The Judge, the awful Judge, amidst all his magnificence and splendor, vouchsafes to confess their names; vouchsafes to commemorate their fidelity, before all the inhabitants of the skies, and the whole assembled world.

HARK! the thunders are hushed. See! the lightnings cease their rage. The angelic armies stand in silent suspense. The whole race of Adam, is wrapped in pleasing or anxious expectation.—And now, that adorable person, whose favour is better than life; whose acceptance is a crown of glory; lifts up the light of his countenance upon the righteous. He speaks; and what ravishing words proceed from his gracious lips! what ecstacies of delight, they enkindle in the breasts of the faithful!—"I accept you, "O my people! ye are they, that believed in my name. "Ye are they, that renounced *yourselves*, and *are complete* "*in me*. I see no spot or blemish in you; for ye are "washed in my blood, and cloathed with my righteous-"ness. Renewed by my spirit, ye have glorified me on "earth, and have been faithful unto death. Come, then, "ye servants of holiness, enter into the joy of your LORD. "Come, ye children of light; ye blessed of my father; "receive the *Kingdom*, that shall never be removed; "wear the *crown*, which fadeth not away, and enjoy *plea-"sures* for evermore!" *

THEN, it will be one of the smallest privileges of the righteous, that they shall languish no more; that sickness will never again shew her pale countenance, in their

dwellings.* *Death itself* will be "swallowed up in victory." That fatal javelin; which has drank the blood of monarchs, and finds its way to the hearts of all the sons of *Adam;* shall be utterly broken. That enormous scythe; which has struck empires from their root, and swept ages and generations into oblivion; shall lie by in perpetual uselessness. *Sin* also, which filled thy quiver, thou insatiate archer! Sin, which strung thy arm with resistless vigour—which pointed all thy shafts with inevitable destruction—Sin, will then be done away. Whatever is *frail,* or *depraved,* will be thrown off with our grave-cloaths. All to come is perfect holiness, and consummate happiness; the term of whose continuance is eternity.

O Eternity! *eternity!* How are our boldest, our strongest thoughts, lost and overwhelmed in thee!—— Who can set landmarks, to limit thy dimensions; or find plumbets, to fathom thy depths? *Arithmeticians* have figures, to compute all the progressions of time. *Astronomers* have instruments, to calculate the distances of the planets. But what numbers can state, what lines can guage, the lengths and breadths of eternity? "It is higher than heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; "what canst thou know? The measure thereof, is longer "than the earth, broader than the sea.†"

Mysterious, mighty existence! A sum, not to be lessened by the largest *deductions!* An extent, not to be contracted by all possible *diminutions!* None can truly say, after the most prodigious waste of ages; "so much of "eternity is gone." For, when millions of centuries are elapsed, it is but just commencing; and, when millions more have run their ample round, it will be no nearer ending. Yea, when ages, numerous as the bloom of spring; increased by the herbage of summer: both augmented by the leaves of autumn; and all multiplied by the drops of rain, which drown the winter—when these, and

* *Isaiah,* speaking of the new *Jerusalem,* mentions this, as one of its immunities; *the inhabitants thereof shall no more say, I am sick* Another clause, in its royal charter, runs thus; *GOD shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain.* Isa. xxxiii. 24. Rev. xxi. 4.

† Job xi. 8, 9.

ten thousand times ten thousand more—more than can be represented by any similitude, or imagined by any conception—when all these are revolved and finished; eternity, vast, boundless, amazing eternity, will *only* be *beginning!*

WHAT a pleasing, yet awful thought is this! Full of delight, and full of dread. O! may it alarm our *fears;* quicken our *hopes;* and animate all our *endeavours!* Since we are soon to launch into this endless and inconceivable state; let us give all diligence, to secure our entrance into bliss.—*Yo o,* let us give all diligence; because there is no alteration, in the scenes of futurity. The wheel never turns: all is stedfast and immoveable beyond the grave. Whether we are then seated on the throne, or stretched on the rack; a seal will be set to our condition, by the hand of everlasting mercy, or inflexible justice!—The *saints* always rejoice amidst the smiles of heaven; their harps are perpetually tuned; their triumphs admit of no interruption.—The ruin of the *wicked* is irremediable. The fatal sentence, once passed, is never to be repealed. No hope of exchanging their doleful habitations. But all things bear the same dismal aspect, for ever and ever.

THE *wicked*—my mind recoils, at the apprehension of their misery. It has studiously waved the fearful subject; and seems unwilling to pursue it, even now.—But 'tis better to reflect upon it, for a few minutes; than to endure it, to eternal ages. Perhaps, the consideration of their aggravated misery, may be *profitably terrible:* may teach me more highly to prize the Saviour, who "delivers from going down into the bottomless pit:" may drive me, like the *Avenger's sword,* to this only *city of refuge,* for obnoxious sinners.

THE wicked seem to lie here, like malefactors, in a deep and strong dungeon; reserved against the day of trial.—"*Their departure* was without peace." Clouds of horror, sat lowering upon their closing eye-lids; most sadly foreboding, the "blackness of darkness for ever." When the last sickness seized their frame, and the inevitable change advanced: when they saw the fatal arrow fitting to the strings; saw the deadly archer, aiming at their life; and felt the envenomed shaft, fastened in their vitals—good

GOD! what fearfulness came upon them! what horrible dread overwhelmed them! how did they stand shuddering, and aghast, upon the tremendous precipice! excessively afraid to plunge into the abyss of eternity, yet utterly unable to maintain their standing on the verge of life.

O! WHAT pale reviews, what startling prospects, conspire to augment their sorrows! they look *backward*, and behold! a most melancholy scene! Sins unrepented of; Mercy slighted; and the day of grace ending; they look *forward*, and nothing presents itself, but the righteous Judge; the dreadful Tribunal; and a most solemn reckoning.—They roll *around* their affrighted eyes, on attending friends. If accomplices in debauchery; it sharpens their anguish, to consider this farther aggravation of their guilt; that they have not sinned alone, but drawn others into the snare. If religious acquaintance; strikes a fresh gash into their hearts, to think of never seeing them any more, but only at an unapproachable distance, separated by the unpassable gulf.

AT last, perhaps, they begin to *pray*. Finding no other possible way of relief, they are constrained to apply unto the Almighty. With trembling lips, and a faltering tongue, they cry unto that Sovereign Being "who kills and makes alive."—But why have they *deferred*, so long deferred their addresses to GOD? why have they *despised* all his counsels; and stood incorrigible, under his incessant reproofs? how often have they been forewarned of these terrors; and most importunately entreated to *seek the LORD, while he might be found?*—I wish, they may obtain mercy at the eleventh, at the last hour. I wish, they may be snatched from the jaws; the opened, the gaping, the almost closing jaws of damnation. But, alas! who can tell, whether affronted Majesty, will lend an ear to their complaint? whether the Holy One will work a miracle of Grace, in behalf of such transgressors? he may, for aught any mortal knows, "laugh "at their calamity. and mock when their fear cometh."

Thus they lie, groaning out the poor remains of life; their limbs bathed in sweat; their heart struggling with convulsive throes; pains insupportable throbbing in every pulse; and innumerable darts of agony transfixing their conscience.

In that dread moment, how the frantic soul
Raves round the walls of her clay tenement;
Runs to each avenue; and shrieks for help;
But shrieks in vain! how wishfully she looks
On all she's leaving, now no longer her's!
A little longer, yet a little longer,
Oh! might she stay, to wash away her crimes,
And fit her for her passage! mournful sight!
Her very eyes weep blood; and ev'ry groan
She heaves, is big with horror. but the foe,
Like a staunch murth'rer, steady to his purpose,
Pursues her close thro' every lane of life,
Nor misses once the track, but presses on;
Till, forc'd at last to the tremendous verge,
At once she sinks.—— THE GRAVE.

If *this* be the *end* of the ungodly, "my soul, come not "thou into their secret! unto their assembly, mine honor, "be not thou united!"—Oh! how awfully accomplished is that prediction of inspired Wisdom! "sin, though seem-"ingly sweet in the *commission*, in the *issue*, biteth like a "serpent, and stingeth like an adder."

Happy dissolution! were this the period of their woes. But alas! all these tribulations, are only "the *beginning of* "*sorrows;*" one small drop of that "cup of trembling," which is mingled for their future portion.—No sooner has the last pang dislodged the reluctant soul; but they are hurried into the presence, of an injured angry God: not under the conducting care of beneficent angels, but exposed to the insults of accursed spirits; who lately *tempted* them, now *upbraid* them, and will for ever *torment* them. Who can conceive their confusion and distress; when they stand, guilty and inexcusable, before their incensed Creator? they are received with frowns: the God that made them, has no mercy on them. The Prince of peace, the Fountain of felicity, rejects them with abhorrence. He consigns them over to *chains of darkness*, and *receptacles of despair;* against the severer doom, and more public infamy, of the great day. Then, all the vials of wrath, will

be emptied upon these wretched creatures. The law they have violated, and the gospel they have slighted; the power they have defied, and the goodness they have abused; will all get themselves honor in their exemplary destruction. Then God, the God to whom vengeance belongeth, will draw the arrow to the very head, and set them as the mark of his inexorable displeasure.

Resurrection, will be no privilege to them; but *immortality* itself, their *everlasting curse.*—Would they not bless the grave, "that land where all things are forgotten;" and wish to lie, eternally hid, in its deepest gloom? but, the dust refuses, to *conceal* their *persons;* or draw a *veil*, over their *practices.* They also must awake; must arise; must appear at the bar; and meet the Judge: a Judge, before whom "the pillars of heaven tremble, and the "earth melts away:" a Judge, once long-suffering, and very compassionate; but now unalterably determined, to teach stubborn offenders,—what it is to *provoke* the omnipotent Godhead: what it is to *trample* upon the blood of his Son: and offer *despite* to all the gracious overtures of his spirit.

Oh! the perplexity! the distraction! that must confound the impenitent rebels; when they are summoned, to the great tribunal! "what can they do, in this day of severe visitation?" this day of final decision?—where? how? from whence, can they find help?—To which of the saints will they turn? Whither betake themselves for shelter?—Alas! 'tis all in vain: 'tis all too late.—Friends and acquaintance, know them no more: heaven and earth abandon them, to their approaching doom: and even the Mediator, the MEDIATOR himself, deserts them in this dreadful hour.—To *fly*, will be impracticable: to *justify* themselves, still more impossible: and now, to make any *supplications*, utterly unavailable.

Behold! the books are opened: the secrets of all hearts, are disclosed: the hidden things of darkness, are brought to light. How empty, how ineffectual, are all those refined *artifices;* with which hypocrites imposed upon their fellow-creatures, and preserved a *character* in the sight of men! the jealous God, who has been about their path, and about their bed, and 'spied out all their ways, "sets

"before them the things that they have done." They cannot answer him one in a thousand, nor stand in the awful judgment. They are *speechless* with *guilt*, and *stigmatized* with *infamy*, before all the angels of light. What a favor would they esteem it; to hide their ashamed heads, in the bottom of the ocean; or even to be buried, beneath the ruins of the tottering world!

If the contempt poured upon them, be so insupportable; O! "how will their hearts endure," when the *sword* of infinite *indignation* is unsheathed; and fiercely waved, around their defenceless heads; or pointed directly, at their naked breasts! how must the wretches scream with wild amazement, and rend the very heavens with their cries, when "the *right-aiming thunderbolts* go abroad!" go abroad, with a dreadful commission, to drive them from the kingdoms of glory; and plunge them, not into the sorrows of a moment, or the tortures of an hour; but into all the restless agonies of unquenchable fire, and everlasting despair.*

Misery of miseries! too shocking for reflection to dwell upon. But, if so dismal to *foresee*; and that at a distance; together with some comfortable expectation of escaping it —O! how bitter, how inconceivably bitter, to *bear*; without any intermission; or any mitigation; through hopeless and eternal ages!

Who has any bowels of pity?—Who has any sentiments of compassion?—Who has any tender concern for his fellow-creatures? who? In God's name, and for Christ's sake, let him shew it; by warning every man, and beseeching every man, to *seek* the Lord while he may be *found*: to throw down the arms of rebellion, before the act of indemnity expires: submissively to adore the lamb, while he holds out the golden sceptre.—Here, let us act the friendly part to mankind: here, let the whole force of our *benevolence* exert itself: in exhorting, whomsoever we are likely to influence, to take the wings of *faith* unfeigned;

* Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace
And rest can never dwell; hope never comes,
That comes to all but torture without end
Still urges, and a fiery deluge, fed
With ever-burning sulphur unconsum'd

MILTON.

of *repentance* undelayed, and "flee away from this wrath "to come."

Upon the whole; what stupendous discoveries are these! lay them up in a faithful remembrance, O my soul. Recollect them, with the most serious attention; when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. When thou walkest, receive them from thy *companions;* when thou talkest, listen to them as thy *prompters;* and whatever thou doest, consult them as thy *directors.* Influenced by these considerations, thy *views* will greaten; thy *affections* be exalted; and thou thyself raised above the tantalizing power of perishing things. Duly mindful of these, it will be the sum of thy *desires,* and scope of thy *endeavours,* to gain the approbation of that Sovereign Being; who will then fill the throne, and pronounce the decisive sentence. Thou wilt see nothing worth a wish,* in comparison of having his will for thy rule; his glory for thy aim; and his holy spirit for thy ever-actuating principle.

Wonder, O man; be lost in admiration; at those *prodigious events,* which are coming upon the universe. Events, the greatness of which, nothing can measure. Such, as will cause, whatever is considerable or momentous in the annals of all generations, to sink into littleness and nothing. [illegible] prepared for their approach; defend us when they take place, big with the everlasting fates, of all the living, and all the dead.—I must see the graves cleaving, the sea teeming, and swarms unsuspected, crouds unnumbered, yea, multitudes of *thronging nations,* rising from both.—I must see the world in flames; must stand at the dissolution of all terrestrial things; and be an attendant on the [illegible]. I must see the vast expanse of the sky, [illegible] a scroll; and the incarnate God, issuing [illegible] inaccessible, with ten thousand times ten thousand [illegible], to judge both *men* and *devils.*—I must see the curtain of time drop; see all eternity disclosed to view; and enter upon a *state* of being, that will never, never have an end.

* Great day of dread, decision, and despair!
At thought of thee each sublunary wish
Lets go its eager grasp, and quits the world.

NIGHT THOUGHTS.

And ought I not (lest the vain imagination determine; ought I not) to try the sincerity of my faith, and take heed to my ways?—Is there an *enquiry*; is there a *care*; of greater, of equal, of comparable importance?—Is not this an infinitely pressing call, to see that my loins are girded about; my lamp trimmed; and myself dressed for the bridegroom's appearance? that, washed in the fountain opened in my Saviour's side, and clad with the marriage garment wove by his obedience; I may be found in peace, unblameable, and unreproveable.—Otherwise, how shall I stand with boldness; when the stars of Heaven fall from their orbs? how shall I come forth *erect* and *courageous*: when the *earth* itself *reels* to and fro like a drunkard *? how shall I look up with joy, and see my salvation drawing nigh; when the hearts of millions and millions fail for fear?

Now, Madam, lest my meditations set a cloud; and leave any unpleasing gloom upon your mind; let me once more turn to the *brightening prospects* of the righteous. A view of them, and their delightful expectations may serve to exhilarate the thoughts; which have been musing upon melancholy subjects, and hovering about the edges of infernal darkness. Just as a spacious field, arrayed in *chearful green*, relieves and reinvigorates the eye; which has fatigued itself by poring upon some minute, or gazing upon some glaring object.

The righteous seem to lie by, in the bosom of the earth, as a *wary pilot* in some well-sheltered creek; till all the storms, which infest this lower world, are blown over. Here they enjoy safe anchorage; are in no danger of *foundering*, amidst the waves of prevailing iniquity; or of being *shipwrecked*, on the rocks of any powerful temptation. But, ere-long, we shall behold them hoisting their flag of hope; riding before a sweet gale of atoning merit, and redeeming love; till they make, with all the sails of an assured faith, the blessed port of eternal life.

Then, may the honored friend, to whom I am writing; rich in good works; rich in heavenly tempers; but inexpressibly richer in her Saviour's righteousness—O! may

* Isai. xxiv. 20

she enter the harbour, like a gallant *stately vessel*; returned successful and victorious from some grand expedition; with acclamations, honor, and joy! while my *little bark*, attendant on the solemnity, and a partaker of the triumph, glides humbly after: and both rest together in the haven—the wish'd for, blissful haven of perfect security, and everlasting repose.



Reflections

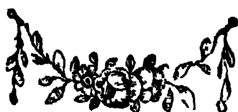
ON A FLOWER-GARDEN.



I look upon the pleasure which we take in a GARDEN, as one of the most innocent delights in human life. A GARDEN was the habitation of our first parents before the fall. It is naturally apt to fill the mind with calmness and tranquillity, and to lay all its turbulent passions at rest. It gives us a great insight into the contrivance and wisdom of Providence, and *suggests innumerable subjects for meditation.*

SPECTATOR, *Vol. VII. No.* 477.





REFLECTIONS ON A FLOWER-GARDEN.

IN A LETTER TO A LADY

MADAM,

time ago, my meditations took a turn among the *Tombs*. They visited the awful and melancholy mansions of the dead*; and you was pleased to favour them with your attention.—May I, now, beg the honour of your company, in a more inviting and delightful excursion? in a beautiful *Flower-garden*; where I lately walked, and at once regaled the sense, and indulged the fancy.

It was early in a *Summer morning*. When the air was cool, the earth moist, the whole face of the creation fresh and gay. The noisy world was scarce awake. *Business* had not quite shook off his sound sleep, and *Riot* had but just reclined his giddy head. All was serene, all was still, every thing tended to inspire tranquillity of mind, and invite to serious thought.

ONLY the watchful lark had left her nest, and was mounting on high, to salute the opening day. Elevated in air, she seemed to call the laborious husbandman to his toil, and all her fellow-songsters to their notes.—Earliest of birds, said I, companion of the dawn, may I always rise at thy voice! rise, to offer the matin-song; and adore that bene-

* " Discourses on the *vanity* of the creature, which represent the barrenness of every " thing in this world, and its incapacity of producing [illegible] " are useful.—Those [illegible] also, which [illegible] ' forth those innocent [illegible] ' that encompass us [illegible] *of these observations, the preceding and following reflections are [illegible]*

ficent Being, "who maketh the out-goings of the morning "and evening to rejoice."

How charming to rove abroad, at this sweet *hour* of *prime*! to enjoy the calm of nature; to tread the dewy lawns, and taste the unrifled freshness of the air!

> Sweet is the breath of morn, her rising sweet,
> With charm of earliest birds.

What a pleasure do the sons of *Sloth* lose? little, ah! little is the sluggard sensible, how delicious an entertainment he foregoes, for the poorest of all animal gratifications.

The grayness of the dawn decays gradually. Abundance of ruddy streaks tinge the fleeces of the firmament. Till, at length, the *dappled* aspect of the East is lost, in one ample and boundless *blush*.—Is it the surmise of imagination, or do the skies really redden with shame; to see so many supinely stretched, on their drowsy pillows? shall man waste these precious hours, in idle slumbers? while the vigorous sun is up, and going on his Maker's errand? while all the feathered choir are hymning the Creator, and paying their homage in harmony?—No. Let *him* heighten the melody of the tuneful tribes, by adding the rational strains of devotion. Let *him* improve the fragrant oblations of nature, by mingling with the rising odours, the more refined breath of praise.

It is natural for man to look upward; to throw his first glance upon the objects that are above him.

> Strait toward Heav'n my wand'ring eyes I turn'd,
> And gaz'd awhile the ample Sky.*

Prodigious theatre! where lightnings dart their fire, and thunders utter their voice: where tempests spend their rage, and worlds unnumbered roll at large!—Oh the *greatness* of that mighty *hand;* which meteth out this amazing circumference, with a span! oh the *immensity* of that wonderful *Being;* before whom this unmeasurable extent, is no more than a point!—And oh (thou pleasing thought!)

I

* Milton's Paradise Lost, B. VIII. l. 257.

the unsearchable *riches* of that *mercy*, which is * *greater than the heavens!* Is more extensive and unbounded, in its gracious exercise; than these illimitable tracts of air, and sea, and firmament! that pardons crimes of the most enormous size, and the most horrid aggravations: pardons them, in consideration of the Redeemer's atonement, with perfect freeness, and the utmost readiness! more readily, if it were possible, that this *all-surrounding expanse* admits, within its circuit, a ridge of mountains, or even a grain of sand.

COME hither, then, ye *awakened*, trembling sinners. Come,† weary and heavy-laden with a sense of your iniquities. Condemn yourselves Renounce all reliance on any thing of your own. Let your *trust be in the tender mercy of* GOD, *for ever and ever.*

IN them hath he set a tabernacle for the Sun.‡—Behold him coming forth, from the chambers of the East. See! the clouds, like floating curtains, are thrown back at his approach. With what *refulgent Majesty* does he walk abroad! how transcendently bright is his countenance, shedding day, and inexhaustible light, through the universe! —Is there a scene though finished by the most elaborate and costly refinements of art, "comparable to these illus-"trious solemnities of opening sunshine? before *these*, all "the studied pageantry of the theatre; the glittering œco-"nomy of an assembly; or even the heightened orna-"ments of a royal palace, hide their diminished heads,

* [illegible]

† The lines [illegible] are admirably descriptive of the spirit and practice hinted [illegible] prayer [illegible] and faith, as it [illegible] the prize.—I [illegible] to [illegible] them into this place, because they have the misfortune to [illegible] own in a [illegible] obscure situation. Their native soil is no other than [illegible] Notwithstanding the unpromising genius of the performance, I [illegible] the greatest masters to produce any thing more spirited, and [illegible] more full of nature, or more flushed with life.

Mercy good LORD, mercy I crave,
This is the total sum,
For mercy, LORD, is all my suit,
LORD, let thy mercy come.

The short sentences—not a single copulative—the frequent repetition of the divine name [illegible] a most incessant reiteration of the blessing so earnestly desired, so infinitely needed [illegible] are [illegible] genuine language of ardour, [illegible] beauties obvious to every eye, and cannot [illegible] the *judicious* taste, or to edify the *gracious* heart.

‡ [illegible] xix. 4.

and shrink into nothing."—I have read of a person, so struck with the splendors of this noble luminary; that he imagined himself made on purpose to contemplate its glories. O! that christians would adopt his persuasion, and transfer it to the *Sun of Righteousness!* thus applied, it would cease to be a chimerical notion, and become a most important truth. For sure I am, it is the supreme happiness of the eternal state; and therefore may well be the ruling concern of this present life; *to know the only true GOD, and JESUS CHRIST, whom he hath sent.*—Nor do I stand alone in this opinion. The very best judge of whatever is valuable in science, or perfective of our nature; a judge, who formed his taste on the maxims of paradise, and received the finishings of his education in the third heavens; this judge, determines to *know nothing but JESUS CHRIST, and him crucified.* He possessed, in his own person, the finest, the most admired *accomplishments;* yet pronounces them no better than *dung*, in comparison of the supereminent excellency of this saving knowledge.

METHINKS, I discern a thousand admirable properties in the sun. 'Tis, certainly, the best material emblem of the Creator. There is more of GOD in its *lustre, energy*, and *usefulness*, than in any other visible being. To worship it as a deity, was the least inexcusable of all the heathen idolatries. One scarce can wonder, that fallen reason should mistake so fair a *copy*, for the adorable *original*. No comparison, in the whole book of sacred wisdom, pleases me more; than that which resembles the blessed JESUS, to yonder regent of the day.* Who now advances on his azure road, to scatter light and dispense gladness through the nations.

WHAT were all the realms of the world, but a *dungeon of darkness*,, without the beams of the Sun? all their fine scenes, hid from our view; lost in obscurity.—In vain, we roll around our eyes in the midnight gloom. In vain, we strive to behold the features of amiable nature. Turn whither we will, no form or comeliness appears. All seems

* Unto you, that fear my name, shall the *sun* of *righteousness* arise, with healing in his wings. *Mal* iv 2.

a dreary waste; an undistinguished chaos. Till the returning hours, have unbarred the gates of light, and let forth the morn.—Then, what a prospect opens! the heavens are paved with azure, and strewed with roses. A variety of the liveliest verdures array the plains. The flowers put on a glow of the richest colours. The whole creation stands forth dressed in all the charms of beauty. The ravished eye looks round, and wonders.

AND what had been the condition of our intellectual nature, without the great Redeemer and His *Divine Revelation?* —alas! what absurd aud unworthy apprehensions, did the *Pagan* Sages form of GOD! what idle dreams, what childish conjectures, were their doctrines of a future state; —how did the bulk, even of that favored nation, the *Jews*, weary themselves in weary vanity, to obtain peace and reconciliation with their offended JEHOVAH! till JESUS arose upon our benighted minds, and brought life and immortality to light; till HE arose, *to enlighten the wretched Gentiles, and to be the glory of his people Israel.*

NOW we no longer cry out, with a restless impatience, *where is GOD my maker?* for we are allowed to contemplate the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, *in the face of JESUS CHRIST*.—Now, we no longer inquire, with an unsatisfied solicitude, "which is the way to bliss?—Because JESUS has marked the *path*, by his shining example; and left us an unerring *clue*, in his holy word.—Now, we have no more reason to proceed with misgiving hearts, in our journey to eternity; or to ask anxiously, as we go; "Who will roll away the stone, and "open the everlasting doors? who will remove the flaming "sword, and give us admission into the delights of para- "dise?" for it is done, all done by the Captain of our Salvation. Sin he has *expiated*, by the unblemished sacrifice of himself. The law he has *fulfilled*, by his perfect obedience. The sinner he *transforms*, by his sanctifying SPIRIT, — In a word; he hath both presented us with a *clear discovery*, of good things to come; aud administered to us an *abundant entrance*, into the final enjoyment of them.

WHENEVER, therefore, we bless GOD for the circling seasons, and revolving day; let us adore, thankfully adore for the *more precious* appearance of the Sun of Righ-

teousness, and his glorious gospel. Without which, we should have been groping, even to this hour, in spiritual darkness, and the shadow of death. Without which, we must have wandered in a maze of inextricable uncertainties; and have "stumbled upon the dark mountains" of error, till we fell into the bottomless pit of perdition.

WITHOUT that grand *enlivening principle*, what were this earth, but a lifeless *moss?* a rude lump of *inactive* matter? the trees could never break forth into leaves, nor the plants spring up into flowers. We should no more behold the meadows, *mantled over* with green; nor the valleys *standing thick* with corn. Or, to speak in the beautiful language of a prophet, "*no longer would the fig-tree blos-"som, nor fruit be in the vine: the labour of the olive "would fail, and the fields could yield no meat: the "flocks must be cut off from the fold, and there would be "no herd in the stalls."—This darts its beams among all the vegetable tribes; and *paints* the spring, and *enriches* the autumn. This pierces to the roots of the vineyard, and the orchard; and sets afloat those fermenting juices, which at length burst into floods of wine, or bend the boughs with a mellow load.—Nor are its favors confined to the *upper regions*; but distributed even unto the *deepest recesses* of creation. It penetrates the beds of metals, and finds its way to "the place of the sapphires." It tinctures the seeds of gold, that are ripening into ore; and throws a brilliancy into the water of the diamond, that is hardening on its rock.—In short; the beneficial agency of this magnificent luminary, is inexpressible. It *beautifies*, and *impregnates*, universal nature. "There is nothing hid from "the heat thereof."

JUST in the same manner, were the *rational world dead in trespasses and sins*, without the reviving energy of JESUS CHRIST. He is "the resurrection, and the life:" the all-powerful cause of the one, and overflowing fountain of the other. "The second *Adam* is *a quickening spirit*," and all his saints live through him. He *shines* upon their affections; and they *shoot* forth into heavenly graces, and *abound* in

* Hab. iii. 17.

the fruits of righteousness. Faith unfeigned, and love undissembled, those noblest productions of the renewed nature, are the effect of *his* operations on the mind. Not so much as one divine disposition could spread itself, not one christian habit unfold and flourish, without the kindly influences of his grace.

As there is no fruitfulness, so likewise no *chearfulness*,* without the sun.—When that auspicious sovereign of the day, diffuses the *mildness* of his *morning* splendors; all creatures are enlivened by his presence, are gladdened with his gifts. Millions of glittering insects awake into existence, and bask in his rays. The birds start from their slumbers, and pour their delighted souls in harmony. The flocks, with bleating accents, hail the welcome blessing. The herds, in lowing murmurs, express their hoarser acclamations. The valleys ring with rural music: the hills echo back the artless strains. All that is vocal, joins in the general choir: all that has breath, exults in the chearing influence.—Whereas, let that radiant orb be *eclipsed*, only for a few minutes; and all nature, immediately, assumes an air of *sadness*. The heavens put on a kind of mourning. The most sprightly animals droop their wings, or hang down their dejected heads. The songsters of the grove are struck dumb. The voice of joy ceases. Howling beasts roam abroad for prey: ominous birds come forth, and screech: the heart of man fails, and a chilling horror seizes the foreboding mind.--So, when CHRIST hides away his face; when faith loses sight of that *consolation* of *Israel*; oh! how *gloomy* are the *prospects* of the soul! our GOD seems to be a consuming fire, and our sins cry loudly for vengeance. The thoughts bleed inwardly; the christian walks heavily: all without is irksome; all within is disconsolate.—Lift up then, most gracious JESUS, thou *nobler day-spring* from on high! O lift up the light of thy countenance, upon thy people! reveal the *fulness* of thy mediato-

* "The sun, which is as the great soul of the universe, and produces all the necessaries "of life, has a particular influence in *chearing* the mind of man, and making the heart *glad*."

SPECTATOR. *Vol. V. No.* 387.

rial sufficiency; make clear *our title* to this great salvation; and thereby impart

> What nothing earthly gives, or can destroy,
> The soul's calm sunshine, and the heart-felt joy.
>
> POPE.

IN one instance more, let me pursue the similitude. The sun, I observe, shoots his beams *every way;* both backwards and forwards; to every point in the compass, as well as to every quarter under heaven. The east reddens, with his rising radiance; and the western hills are gilded, with his streaming splendors. The chilly regions of the north, are cheared by his genial warmth; while the southern tracts, glow with his fire.—Thus, are the influences of the sun of righteousness, *diffusive* and *unconfined.* The generations of old felt them; and generations yet unborn, will rejoice in them. The merits of his precious death *extended* to the *first,* and will be *propagated* to the *last,* ages of mankind.—May they, ere long, visit the remotest climates, and darkest corners of the earth! command thy gospel, blessed JESUS, thy everlasting gospel, to take the wings of the morning, and travel with yonder sun. Let it fly upon strong pinions among every people, nation, and language: that where the heat broils, and the cold freezes, thou mayst be known, confessed, and adored: that *strangers* to thy name, and *enemies* to thy doctrines, may be *enlightened* with the knowledge, and *won* to the love, of thy truth! O! may that best of æras come; that wished for period advance; when "all the ends of the world shall re-"member themselves, and be turned unto the LORD; and "all the kindreds of the nations worship before him!"

FROM the heavens, we retire to the earth.—Here, the drops of *dew,* like so many liquid crystals,* sparkle upon the eye. How *brilliant,* and unsullied, is their *lustre!* how little inferior to the proud stone, that irradiates a monarch's crown! They want nothing but solidity and permanency; to equal them with the finest treasures, of the

* Now morn, her rosy steps in th' eastern clime
Advancing, sow'd the earth with orient pearl.

MILTON.

jeweller's casket.—But here; indeed, they are greatly deficient; short-lived ornaments; possessed of little more than a *momentary radiancy.* The sun, that lights them up, will soon exhale them. Within another hour, we may " look " for their place, and they shall be away."—Oh! may every *good resolution* of mine, and of my flock's; may our united breathings after God, not be like these *transient decorations* of the morning; but like the *substantial glories* of the growing day! these shine more and more, with augmented splendors; while those, having glittered gayly for a little while, disappear, and are lost.

How sensibly has this dew *refreshed* the vegetable kingdoms! the fervent heat of yesterday's sun, had almost parched the face, and exhausted the sweets, of nature. But, what a *sovereign restorative*, are these *cooling distillations* of the night! how they gladden, and invigorate, the languishing herbs! sprinkled with these reviving drops, their verdure deepens; their bloom is new-flushed; their fragrance, faint, or intermitted, becomes potent and copious. —So, does the ever-blessed Spirit *revive* the drooping, troubled *conscience* of a sinner. When that Almighty Comforter sheds his sweet influence on the Soul; displays the all-sufficient sacrifice of a Divine Redeemer; and " witnesses " with our Spirit," that we are *interested* in the *Saviour*, and, by this means, are *children* of *GOD;* then, what a pleasing change ensues! former anxieties are remembered no more. Every uneasy apprehension vanishes. Soothing hopes, and delightful expectations, succeed. The *countenance* drops its dejected mien; the *eyes* brighten with a lively chearfulness; while the *lips* express the heart-felt satisfaction, in the language of thanksgiving, and the voice of melody.—In this sense, merciful God, *be as the dew unto Israel!* " pour upon them the continual dew of thy bles- " sing." And oh! let not my fleece be dry, while heavenly benediction descends upon all around.

Who can number these pearly drops? they hang on every hedge; twinkle from every spray; and adorn the whole herbage of the field. Not a blade of grass, not a single leaf, but wears these watery pendants. So *vast* is the *profusion*, that it baffles the *arithmetician's art.*—Here, let the benevolent breast contemplate, with delight, that empha-

tical scripture; which describes the *increase* of the *Messiah's kingdom*, from this elegant similitude. The royal prophet, speaking of CHRIST, and foretelling the success of his religion, has this remarkable expression,* *the dew of thy birth is of the womb of the morning;* (i. e.) as the morning is the mother of dews; produces them, as it were, from a prolific womb; and scatters them, with the most lavish abundance, over all the surface of the earth: *so shall thy seed be*, O thou everlasting Father! by the preaching of thy word, shall such an innumerable race of regenerate children be born unto thee, and fill all lands. Millions, millions of willing converts, shall *croud* into thy family, and *replenish* thy church; till they become like the stars of heaven, or the sands of the sea, for multitude; or even as *numberless* as these fine *spangles*, which now cover the face of nature. —Behold then, ye obstinately wicked, tho' you "are not gathered, yet will the Saviour be glorious." His design shall not miscarry, nor his labour prove abortive; tho' you render it of none effect, with regard to yourselves. Think not, that IMMANUEL will want *believers*, or heaven *inhabitants*, because *you* continue *incorrigible*. No; the Lamb that was slain, will "see of the travail of his soul, "and be satisfied;" in a never-failing series of faithful people below, and an immense choir of glorified saints above: who shall form his retinue, and surround his throne, in shining and triumphant armies, such as no man can number.

HERE, I was reminded of the various *expedients* which Providence, unsearchably wise, uses, to *fructify* both the material and intellectual world.—Sometimes, you shall have *impetuous* and heavy *showers*, bursting from the angry

* Psalm cx. 3. The dew of thy birth is larger, more copious, than the dew which proceeds from the womb of the morning.—I cannot acquiesce in the new version; because that disjoins *the womb of the morning*, from *the dew of thy birth*: whereas, they seem to have a clear affinity, and close connexion. The womb of the morning is, with abundance of elegance, applied to the conception and production of dews; agreeably to a delicate line, in that great master of just description, and lively painting, *Mr Thomson*.

The meek-ey'd morn appears, mother of dews.

SUMMER.

clouds. They lash the plains, and make the rivers foam. A storm brings them, and a deluge follows them.—At other times, these *gentle dews* are formed, in the serene evening air: they steal down by soft degrees, and with insensible stilness; so subtle, that they deceive the nicest eye; so silent, that they escape the most delicate ear.—Yet, these very *different* operations, concur in the *same* beneficial end; and impart fertility to the lap of nature.—So, some have I known, reclaimed from the unfruitful works of darkness, by *violent* and severe *means*. The Almighty addressed their stubborn hearts, as he addressed the *Israelites* at *Sinai*, with lightning in his eyes, and thunder in his voice. The mind, smit with a sense of guilt, and apprehensive of eternal vengeance, trembled through all her powers; just as that strong mountain tottered to its centre. Pangs and agonies preceded their new birth. They travailed in pain, and were reduced to the sorest extremities, before they found rest to their souls.—Others have been recovered from a vain conversation, by *methods* more *mild* and attractive. The Father of spirits applied himself to their tender consciences, in " a still and small voice." His grace came down, as the rain into a fleece of wool; or as these softening drops, that now water the earth. The kingdom of God took place in their hearts, without noise or observation They passed from death unto life, from a carnal to a regenerate state, by almost imperceptible advances. The transition resembled the growth of corn: was very visible, when effected; though scarce sensible, while accomplishing.—O thou author and finisher of our faith, recal us from our wanderings, and reunite us to thyself! whether thou *alarm* us with thy *terrors*, or *allure* us with thy *smiles*: whether thou drive us with the scourges of conviction, or draw us with the cords of love: let us, in any wise, return to thee; for thou art our supreme good; thou art our only happiness.

Before I proceed further, let me ascend the *terrace*, and take one survey of the neighbouring *country*.—O! what a prospect rushes upon my sight! how vast; how various; how " full and plenteous with all manner of store!" nature's whole wealth!—What a rich and inexhaustible magazine is here: furnishing subsistence for every creature!

Methinks, I read, in these spacious volumes, a most lively comment, upon that noble celebration of the divine beneficence; *he openeth his hand, and filleth all things living with plenteousness.*

> These are thy glorious works, Parent of Good,
> Almighty! thine this universal frame,
> Thus wond'rous fair! thyself how wond'rous then!
>
> MILTON.

THE *fields* are covered deep, and stand thick, with corn. They expand the milky *grain* to the sun; in order to receive from his beams, a more firm consistence, and a golden hue: that they may be qualified, to fill the husbandman's barns with plenty, and his heart with gladness.

YONDER lie the *meadows*, smoothed into a perfect level; decorated with an embroidery of the gayest flowers; and loaded with spontaneous crops of *herbage:* which, converted into hay, will prove a most commodious provision for the barrenness of winter; will supply with fodder our serviceable animals, when all the verdure of the plain is killed by frosts, or buried in snows.—A winding *stream*, glides along the flowery margin; and receives the image of the bending skies, and waters the roots of many a branching willow. 'Tis stocked, no doubt, with variety of *fish;* that afford a solitary diversion to the angler, and nourish for his table a delicious treat. Nor is it the only merit of this liquid element, to maintain the finny nations; it also carries *cleanliness*, and dispenses *fruitfulness*, wherever it rolls the crystal current.

The *pastures*, with their verdant mounds, chequer the prospect; and prepare a standing repast for our cattle. "There, our *oxen* are made strong to labour; and our *sheep* "bring forth thousands, and ten thousands." There, the *horse* acquires vigour, for the dispatch of our business; and speed, to expedite our journeys. From thence, the *kine* bring home their udders, distended with one of the richest, and healthiest liquors, in the world.

ON several spots, a *grove* of trees, like some grand colonnade, erects its towering head. Every one projects a friendly shade, for the beasts; and creates a hospitable lodging, for the birds. Every one stands ready, to furnish

timber for a palace; *masts* for a navy; or, with a more condescending courtesy, *fuel* for our hearths.—One of them seems skirted with a wild uncultivated *heath;* which, like well-disposed shades in painting, throws an additional lustre on the more ornamented parts of the landscape. Nor is its usefulness like that of a foil, relative only, but real. There, several valuable *creatures* are produced, and accommodated; without any expence, or care of ours.—There, likewise, spring abundance of those *herbs*, which asswage the smart of our wounds, and allay the fiery tumults of the fever; which impart floridity to our circulating fluids; add a more vigorous tone to our active solids; and, thereby, repair the decays of our enfeebled constitutions.

NEARER the houses, one perceives a spacious *spread of branches;* not so stately as the oaks, but more amiable for their annual services. A little while ago, I beheld them; and all was one beauteous, boundless, waste of *blossoms.*—The eye marvelled, at the lovely sight; and the heart rejoiced, in the prospect of autumnal plenty. But now, the blooming maid is resigned, for the useful matron: the flower is fallen, and the *fruit* swells out on every twig.—Breathe soft, ye winds! oh, spare the tender fruitage, ye surly blasts! let the *pear* there suckle her juicy progeny; till they drop into our hands, and dissolve in our mouths. Let the *plum* hang unmolested upon her boughs; till she fatten her delicious flesh, and cloud her polished skin with blue. And as for the *apples,* that staple commodity of our *orchards,* let no injurious shocks precipitate them immaturely to the ground; till revolving suns, have tinged them with a ruddy complexion, and concocted them into an exquisite flavour. Then, what innumerable classes, of what burnished rinds, and what delightful relishes, will replenish the store-room! some, to present us with an early entertainment, and refresh our palates amidst the sultry heats: some, to borrow ripeness from the falling snows, and carry autumn into the depths of winter: some, to adorn the salver, make a part of the dessert, and give an agreeable close to our feasts: others, to fill our vats with a foaming flood; which, mellowed by age, may sparkle in the glass, with a liveliness and delicacy, little inferior to the blood of the grape

I OBSERVE several small *inclosures*, which seem to be apprehensive of some hostile visit from the North; and, therefore, are defended, on that quarter, by a thick wood, or a lofty wall. At the same time, they cultivate an uninterrupted correspondence with the South; and throw open their whole dimensions, to its friendly warmth. One, in particular, lies within the reach of a distinguishing view; and proves to be a *kitchen-garden*. It looks, methinks, like a plain and frugal republic; whatever may resemble the pomp of courts, or the ensigns of royalty, is banished from this humble community. None of the productions of the olitory affect finery; but all are habited with the very perfection of decency. Here, those celebrated qualities are eminently united, the utmost simplicity, with the exactest neatness.—A skilful hand has parcelled out the whole ground, into narrow beds, and intervening alleys. The same discreet management has assigned to each verdant family, a peculiar and distinct abode. So that there is no confusion, amidst the greatest multiplicity; because every individual knows its proper home, and all the tribes are ranged with perfect regularity.—If it be pleasing to behold their orderly situation, and their modest beauties; how much more delightful, to consider the advantages, they yield! whar a *fund* of choice *accommodations* is here! what a source of wholesome dainties! and all, for the enjoyment of man. Why does the *parsley*, with her frizzled locks, shag the border; or why the *celery*, with her whitening arms, perforate the mold; but to render his soups savoury? the *asparagus* shoots its tapering stems, to offer him the first-fruits of the season; and the *artichoke* spreads its turgid top, to give him a treat of vegetable marrow. The tendrils of the * *cucumber* creep into the sun; and, though

* *Virgil*, with great conciseness, and equal propriety describes the *cucumber*,

Tortusque cucumis
Crescerct in ventrem.

Milton has (if we admit Dr *Bentley*'s alteration, which is, I think, in *this* place, unquestionably just) almost translated the *latin* poet,

——— Forth crept
The *swelling* gourd.

Georg. IV. Par. Lost, B. VII. l. 320.

basking in its hottest rays, they secrete for their master, and barrel up for his use, the most cooling juices of the soil. The *beans* stand firm, like files of embattled troops; the *peas* rest upon their props, like so many companies of invalids; while both replenish their pods with the fatness of the earth, on purpose to pour it on their owner's table.— Not one species, among all this variety of herbs, is a cumberer of the ground. Not a single plant, but is good for food, or some way salutary. With so beneficent an œconomy, are the several periods of their ministration settled; that no portion of the year is left destitute of nourishing esculents. What is still more obliging, every portion of the year affords such esculents, as are best suited to the temperance of the air, and the state of our bodies.—Why then should the possesor of so valuable a spot, envy the condition of kings? since he may daily walk amidst rows of peaceable and obsequious, though mute subjects. Every one of which renders him some agreeable present, and pays him a willing tribute. Such as is most happily adapted, both to supply his wants, and to regale his taste; to furnish him, at once, with plenty and with pleasure.

At a distance, one descries the mighty hills. They heave their huge ridges among the clouds; and look like the barriers of kingdoms, or the boundaries of nature. Bare and deformed as their surface may appear, their bowels are fraught with inward treasures! treasures, lodged fast in the *quarries*, or sunk deep in the *mines*. From thence, industry may draw her implements, to plow the soil; to reap the grain; and procure every necessary convenience. From thence, art may fetch her materials, to rear the doom; to swell the organ; and form the noblest ornaments of politer life.

On another side, the *great deep* terminates the view. *There go the ships: there is that Leviathan:* and there, in that world of waters, an inconceivable number of animals have their habitation. This is the capacious *cistern* of the *universe;* which admits, as into a receptacle; and distributes, as from a reservoir; whatever waters the whole globe. There's not a fountain, that gushes in the unfrequent desart; nor a rivulet, that flows in the remotest continent; nor a cloud, that swims in the highest regions of the firmament;

but is fed by this all-replenishing source. The ocean is the grand *vehicle* of *trade*, and the uniter of distant nations. To us it is peculiarly kind, not only as it wafts into our ports, the harvest of every climate; and renders our island the centre of traffic; but also as it secures us from foreign invasions, by a sort of impregnable entrenchment *.

METHINKS, the view of this profuse munificence inspires a *secret delight*, and kindles a *disinterested good-will*. While the "little hills clap their hands," and the luxurient "val-"leys laugh and sing;" who can forbear catching the general joy? who is not touched, with lively sensations of pleasure? while the everlasting father, is scattering blessings through his whole family, and crowning the year with his goodness; who does not feel his breast overflowing, with a diffusive benevolence?—My heart, I must confess, beats high with satisfaction; and breaths out *congratulatory wishes*, upon all the tenants of these rural abodes: "peace "be within your walls, as well as plenteousness around "your dwellings." Live, ye highly favored; live sensible of your benefits, and thankful to your Benefactor. Look round upon these prodigiously large incomes of the fruitful soil, and call them (for you have free leave) all your own. Only let me remind you of one very important truth. Let me suggest, and may you never forget; that you are *obliged* to CHRIST JESUS, for every one of these accommodations, which spring from the teeming earth, and the smiling skies.

1. CHRIST† *made* them, when they were not.—He fetched them up from utter darkness! and gave them both their being, and their beauty. He created the materials, of

* Whose rampart was the sea *Nahum* iii 8.

† When I ascribe the work of creation to the SON, I am far, very far, from offering to exclude the eternal FATHER, and ever-blessed SPIRIT, from the same honor The acts of those inconceivably glorious persons are, like their essence, undivided and one. But I choose to state the important point in this manner, because this is the manifest doctrine of the new testament; the express belief of our church, and a most noble peculiarity of the gospel revelation.—I choose it also, because I would take every opportunity of inculcating, and celebrating, the *divinity* of the REDEEMER: a truth, that imparts an unutterable dignity to christianity. a truth, which lays a most immoveable foundation for all the comfortable hopes of a christian · a truth, which will render the mistery of our redemption, the wonder and delight of eternity: and with this truth, every one will observe, my assertion is inseparably connected

which they are composed; and moulded them into this endless multiplicity, of amiable forms, and useful substances. He arrayed the heavens, with a vesture of the mildest blue; and cloathed the earth, in a livery of the gayest green. * His pencil streaked, and his breath perfumed, whatever is beautiful or fragrant in the universe. His strength set fast the mountains; his goodness garnished the vales; and the same *touch* which healed the *leper*, wrought the whole visible *system* into this complete perfection.

2. Christ *recovered* them, when they were forfeited.—By *Adam's* sin, we lost our right to the comforts of life, and the fruits of the ground. His disobedience was the most impious and horrid *treason*, against the King of kings. Consequently, his whole patrimony became *confiscated*. as well as the portion of temporal good things, settled upon the human race during their minority; as that everlasting heritage reserved for their enjoyment, when they should come to full age. But the "seed of the woman, instantly interposing, took off the attainder, and redeemed the alienated inheritance. The first *Adam* being disinherited, the second *Adam* was *appointed heir of all things*, visible as well as invisible. And we hold our possession of the former; we expect an instatement in the latter; purely by virtue of our alliance to him, and our union with him.

3. Christ *upholds* them, which would otherwise tumble into ruin.—By *him*, says the oracle of inspiration, *all things* consist.† His finger rolls the seasons round, and presides over all the celestial revolutions. His finger winds up the wheels, and impels every spring of vegetative nature. In a word, the whole weight of the creation, rests upon his mighty arm; and receives the whole harmony of its motion from his unerring eye.—This habitable globe, with all its rich appendages, and fine machinery, could no more continue, than they could create themselves. *Start* they would into instant *confusion*; or *drop* into their primitive *nothing*; did not his power support, and his wisdom regulate them, every moment. In conformity to his will, they subsist stedfast and invariable in their orders; and wait only for his sovereign nod, to "fall away like water, that runneth apace."

* Heb. i. 2. † Col. i. 17.

4. Christ* *actuates* them, which would otherwise be lifeless and insignificant.—Pensioners they are, constant pensioners on his bounty; and borrow their *all* from his fullness. *He only has life*; and whatever operates, operates by an emanation from his all-sufficiency. Does the grape refresh you, with its enlivening juices? is it by a warrant received, and virtue derived, from the Redeemer. Does bread strengthen your heart, and prove the staff of your life? remember that it is by the Saviour's appointment, and through the efficacy of his operation. You are charmed with *his* melody, when the "time of the singing of birds "is come, and the voice of the nightingale is heard in "your land." You taste *his* goodness in the luscious fig, the melting peach, and the musky flavour of the apricot. You smell *his* sweetness in the opening honeysuckle, and every oderiferous shrub.

Could these creatures speak for themselves, they would, doubtless, disclaim all sufficiency of their own, and ascribe the whole honor to their Maker.—"We are servants," would they say, "of him, who died for you, *cisterns* "only, dry cisterns in ourselves, we *transmit* to mortals no "more, than the uncreated fountain transfuses into us. "Think not, that, from any ability of our own, we furnish you with assistance, or administer to your comfort. "'Tis the divine energy, the divine energy alone, that "works in us, and does you good.—We *serve* you, O ye "sons of men, that you may *love* him, who placed us in "these stations. O! love the Lord, therefore, all ye "who are supported by our ministry; or else we shall† "groan, with indignation and regret, at your abuse of "our services.—Use us, and welcome; for we are yours, "if ye are Christ's. Crop our choicest beauties; rifle all

* John v. 17. *My Father worketh hitherto, and I work*: (i. e) I exert that unremitting and unwearied energy, which is the life of the creation. Thus the words are paraphrased by a masterly expositor, who has illustrated the life of our blessed Lord in the most elegant taste of criticism; with the most amiable spirit of devotion; and without any mixture of the malignant leaven, or low singularities, of a party. See the *Family Expositor*, vol. I. sect. 47.

† Rom. viii. 22.

" our treasures; accommodate yourselves with our most " valuable qualities; only let us be incentives to your *gra-* " *titude*, and motives to your *obedience*."

Having surveyed the spacious sky; and sent a glance round the inferior creation; 'tis time to descend from this eminence, and confine my attention to the *beautiful spot* below—here nature, always pleasing, every where lovely, appears with peculiar attractions. Yonder, she seems dressed in her deshabille; grand, but irregular. Here, she calls in her handmaid art; and shines in all the delicate ornaments, which the nicest cultivation is able to convey. *Those*, are her common apartments. where she lodges her ordinary guests; *this*, is her cabinet of curiosities, where she entertains her intimate acquaintance.—My eye shall often expatiate, over those scenes of universal fertility: my feet shall sometimes brush through the thicket, or traverse the lawn, or stroll along the forest glade: but to this delightful retreat, shall be my chief resort. Thither, will I *make excursions*; but here will I *dwell*.

If, from my low proceedure, I may form an illusion to the most exalted practices; I would observe, upon this occasion; that the celebrated *Erasmus*, and our judicious *Locke*, having trod the circle of the sciences, and ranged through the whole extent of *human* literature, at length betook themselves solely to the *Bible*. Leaving the sages of antiquity, they sat incessantly at the feet of Jesus, Wisely they withdrew, from that immense multiplicity of learning; from those endless tracts of amusing erudition; where, noxious weeds are mixed with wholesome herbs; where, is generally a much larger growth of prickly shrubs, than of fruitful boughs. They spent their most mature hours, in those hallowed gardens, which God's own wisdom planted; which God's own spirit watereth; and in which God's own Son is continually walking. Where, he meeteth those that seek him! and revealeth to them the glories of his person, and the riches of his goodness.

Thus would I finish the remainder of my days! having just *tasted* (what they call) the politer studies; I would now devote my whole *application* to the lively oracles. From other pursuits, I might glean, perhaps, a few scattered fragments of low, of lean, of unsatisfactory instruc-

tion. From this, I trust to reap a harvest of the sublimest truths; the noblest improvements; and the purest joys.—Waft me then, O! waft my mind to *Sion's* consecrated bowers. Let my thoughts perpetually rove, through the awfully pleasing walks of inspiration. Here, grow those heavenborn plants, the trees of *life* and *knowledge*; whose ambrosial fruits we now may "take and eat, and live for "ever." Here, flow those precious streams of *grace* and *righteousness*; whose living waters "whosoever drinks, "shall thirst no more." And what can the fables of *Grecian* song, or the finest pages of *Roman* eloquence—What can they exhibit, in any degree comparable, to these matchless prerogatives of revelation?—Therefore, though I should not dislike to pay a *visit* now and then to my *Heathen masters*; I would *live* with the *prophets* and *apostles*. With the one, I would carry on some occasional correspondence: but the others, should be my bosom-friends; my inseparable companions; "my delight, and my counsel-"lors."

What *sweets* are these, that so agreeably salute my nostrils? they are the breath of the flowers; the incense of the garden.—How liberally does the jessamine dispense her odoriferous riches! how deliciously has the woodbine imbalmed this morning-walk! the air is all perfume.—And is not this, another most engaging argument, to forsake the bed of *sloth*? Who would lie dissolved in senseless slumbers; while so many breathing sweets, invite him to a feast of fragrancy? especially considering, that the advancing day will exhale the volatile dainties. A *fugitive treat* they are, prepared only for the wakeful and industrious: whereas, when the sluggard lifts his heavy eyes, the flowers will droop; their fine scents be dissipated; and instead of this refreshing humidity, the air will become a kind of liquid fire.

With this very *motive*, heightened by a representation of the most charming pieces of morning scenery, the Parent of mankind awakes his lovely consort. There is such a *delicacy* in the *choice*, and so much *life* in the *description*, of these rural images; that I cannot excuse myself, without repeating the whole passage.—Whisper, it, some friendly

genius, in the ear of every one, that is now sunk in sleep, and lost to all these noble gratifications!

> Awake: the morning shines, and the fresh field
> Calls you: ye lose the prime, to mark how spring
> The tended plants, how blows the citron grove;
> What drops the myrrh, and what the balmy reed;
> How nature paints her colours; how the bee
> Sits on the bloom, extracting liquid sweets.*

How *delightful* is this *fragrance!* it is distributed in the nicest *proportion;* neither so strong, as to oppress the organs; nor so faint, as to elude them.—We often sit cloyed and sated at a sumptuous banquet; but this pleasure never loses its *poignancy*, never palls the appetite.—Here, luxury itself is innocent and refined; or rather, in this case, indulgence is incapable of excess.—This balmy entertainment, not only regales the *sense*, but † chears the very *soul;* and, instead of clogging, elates its powers.—It puts me in mind of that ever-memorable sacrifice, which was once made in behalf of offending mortals. I mean the *sacrifice of the blessed* JESUS; when he offered up himself to GOD, "for a "sweet-smelling savour." For such the holy spirit stiles that wonderful oblation: as no image, in the whole sensible creation, was so proper to give us an idea of the *infinite satisfaction;* which the Father of mercies conceived from that unparalleled atonement; as the *pleasing sensations*, which such rich perfumes are capable of raising.—"Thousands of rams, and ten thousands of rivers of oil," from an apostate world, the most submissive acknowledgments, added to the most costly offerings, from men of defiled hands, and unclean lips; what could they have effected? A prophet introduces the "High and Lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity," turning himself away from such filthy rags; turning himself away, with a disdainful abhorrence,‡ as from the noisome steams of a dunghill.—But, in

* Milton's Par. Lost, B V l 20.

† Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart. –*Prov.* xxvii. 9

‡ Amos v. 21, 22

CHRIST's immaculate holiness; in CHRIST's consummate obedience; in CHRIST's most precious blood-shedding: O! with what unimaginable complacency, does justice rest satisfied, and vengeance acquiesce!—All thy *works*, O thou *surety* for ruined sinners! all thy *sufferings*, O thou *slaughtered* lamb of GOD! as well as all thy *garments*, O thou *bridegroom* of thy church! * *smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia!* They are infinitely more gratefnl to the eternal Godhead, than the choicest exhalations of the garden, than all the odours of the spicy east, can be to our nostrils.

As the altar of old sanctified the gift; so this is the great propitiation, which recommends the *obnoxious persons*, and *unprofitable services*, of the believing world. In *this*, may my soul be interested! by *this*, may it be reconciled to the Father!—There is such a leprous depravity cleaving to my nature, as pollutes whatever I perform. My most profound adorations, and sincerest acts of religion, must not presume to *challenge* a reward, but humbly *implore* forgiveness:† renouncing, therefore, myself in every instance of duty; disclaiming all shadow of confidence‡ in any deeds of my own; may I, now and evermore, *be accepted through the Beloved!* WHAT *colours*, what charming colours, are here! these, so nobly *bold*; and those, so delicately *languid*. What a *glow*, is enkindled in some! what a *gloss* shines upon others! in one, methinks, I see the ruby, with her bleeding radiance; in another, the sapphire, with her sky-tinctured blue; in all, such an exquisite richness of dyes,

* Psalm xlv. 9.

† A writer of distinguished superiority *thus* addresses the great observer of actions, and searcher of hearts; and vindicates *my* sentiments, while he so justly and beautifully utters his own;

Look down, great GOD, with pity's softest eye,
On a poor breathing particle in dust
His crimes forgive; forgive his virtues too,
Those *smaller faults, half converts* to the right.

NIGHT THOUGHTS, No. 9.

‡ See page 44 and 45, in the *second* edition of a most *candid* and *evangelical* little treatise, called Christianity, the Great Ornament of Human Life, printed for *J.* and *J. Bonwicke*, in St Paul's church-yard

as no other set of paintings in the universe can boast.*— With what a masterly *skill*, is every one of the varying tints *disposed!* here, they seem to be thrown on with an *easy dash*, of security and freedom; there, they are adjusted by the *nicest touches*, of art and accuracy. Those which form the ground, are always so judiciously chosen, as to heighten the lustre of the superadded figures; while the verdure of the impalement, or the shadings of the foliage, impart new liveliness to the whole. Indeed, whether they are blended, or arranged; softened, or contrasted, they are manifestly under the conduct of a taste, that never mistakes; a felicity, that never falls short of; the very perfection of elegance.—Fine, imitably fine, is the *texture* of the web; on which these shining treasures are displayed. What are the labours of the *Persian* looms, or the boasted commodities of *Brussels*, compared with these curious manufactures of nature? compared with these, the most admired chintses lose their reputation; even superfine cambrics, appear coarse as canvas in their presence.

WHAT a cheering argument does our Saviour derive from hence, to strengthen our *affiance* in GOD! he directs us to learn a lesson of heaven-depending faith, from every bird, that wings the air; and from every flower, that blossoms in the field. If Providence, with unremitted care, supports those inferior creatures; and arrays these insensible Beings, with so much splendor; surely, he will in no-wise with-hold, from his elect Children, "bread to eat, "and raiment to put on."—Ye faithful followers of the lamb, dismiss every low *anxiety*, relating to the needful *sustenance* of life. He that feeds the ravens, from an inexhaustible magazine! He that paints the plants, with such surpassing elegance; in short, he that provides so liberally both for the animal and vegetable parts of his creation;

* Who can paint
Like *nature*? can imagination boast,
Amid his gay creation, hues like these?
And can he mix them with that matchless skill,
And lay them on so delicately fine,
And lose them in each other, as appears
In ev'ry bud that blows?

THOMSON'S SPRING

will not, cannot, neglect his own people.—*Fear not, little flock*, ye peculiar objects of almighty love! *it is your father's good pleasure, to give you a kingdom* *. And if he freely gives you, an everlasting kingdom hereafter; is it possible to suppose, that he will deny you any necessary conveniencies here?

One cannot forbear reflecting, in this place, on the too prevailing humour, of being fond and ostentatious of *dress* †. What an abject and mistaken ambition is this! how unworthy the dignity of *immortal*, and the wisdom of *rational* Beings! especially, since these little productions of the earth, have indisputably the pre-eminence, in such outward embellishments,—Go: cloath thyself with purple, and fine linnen; trick thyself up in all the gay attire, which the shuttle or the needle can furnish. Yet know, to the mortification of thy vanity, that the *native* elegance of a common daisy.‡ eclipses all this *elaborate* finery.—Nay, wert thou decked like some illustrious Princess, on her coronation-day, in all the splendor of royal apparel; couldst thou equal even *Solomon*, in the height of his magnificence and glory; yet, would the meanest among the *flowery populace* outshine thee. Every discerning eye, would give the preference, to these beauties of the § ground.—Scorn then to borrow thy recommendations, from a neat disposition of threads, and a curious arrangement of colours. Assume a becoming greatness of temper. Let thy endowments be of the immortal kind. Study to be all-glorious *within*. Be cloathed with

* Luke xii. 32.

† Mr. Addison has a fine remark on a famous female warrior, celebrated by *Virgil*. He observes, that, with all her other great qualities, [illegible] itself. Because, as the poet relates, an intemperate fondness for a rich and splendid suit of armour, betrayed her into ruin. In this circumstance, our critic discovers a [illegible] concealed, which he admires, as a neat, though oblique *satire*, on that trifling passion. Spect. *Vol.* I. *No.* 15.

‡ Peaceful and lowly in their native soil,
They neither know to spin, nor care to toil;
Yet with confess'd magnificence deride
Our mean attire, and impotence of pride.

PRIOR.

§ Mr. *Cowley*, with his usual brilliancy of imagination, stiles them *stars of earth*

humility. Wear the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit.* To say all in a word; *put on the* LORD JESUS CHRIST:† let his *blood* be sprinkled upon thy conscience, and it shall be whiter than the virgin snows. Let his *righteousness*, like a spotless robe, adorn thy inner man; and thou shalt be amiable, even in the most distinguishing eye of GOD. Let his blessed spirit dwell in thy heart; and, under his sanctifying operations, thou shalt be made partaker of a divine nature.

THESE are *real excellencies;* truly noble accomplishments these. In this manner be arrayed, be beautified; and thou wilt not find a rival, in the feathers of a peacock, or the foliation of a tulip. These will exalt thee, far above the *low pretensions* of lace and embroidery. These will prepare thee to stand in the beatific presence, and to take thy seat among the angels of light.

WHAT an enchanting *situation* is this! one can scarce be melancholy, within the *atmosphere* of flowers: such lively hues, and delicious odours, not only address themselves agreeably to the senses; but touch, with a surprising delicacy, the sweetest movements of the mind:

——— To the heart inspiring
Vernal delight and joy.
MILTON, B. IV.

HOW often have I felt them *dissipate* the *gloom* of *thought*, and transfuse a sudden gaiety thro' the dejected spirit! I cannot wonder, that *kings* descend from their *thrones*, to walk amidst *blooming ivory* and *gold;* or retire from the most sumptuous feasts, to be recreated with the more refined sweets of the garden; I cannot wonder, that *queens* forego, for a while, the compliments of a nation, to receive the tribute of the parterre; or withdraw from all the glitter of a *court*, to be attended with the much more splendid *equipage* of a *bed* of *flowers*.—But, if this be so

* How beautifully does the prophet describe the *furniture*, of a renewed and heavenly *mind*, under the similitude of a rich and complete suit of *apparel!* *I will greatly rejoice in the* LORD: *my soul shall be joyful in my* GOD; *for he hath cloathed me with the garments of salvation; he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.* Isai. lxi. 10.

† Rom. xiii 14.

pleasing; what transporting pleasure must arise, from the fruition of uncreated Excellency! O, what *unknown delight*, to enter into thy *immediate presence*, most blessed LORD GOD! To see thee,* thou King of Heaven, and LORD of Glory, no longer "through a glass darkly, but face to face!" To have all thy goodness, all thy greatness, shine before us; and be made glad for ever with the brightest discovery of thy perfections, with the ineffable joy of thy countenance!

THIS we cannot bear, in our present imperfect state.— The *effulgence* of unveiled Divinity, would *dazz*[illegible] sight. Our feeble faculties could not but be *o*[illegible] with such a *fulness* of bliss; and must lie *oppresse*[illegible] such "an exceeding great, eternal *weight* of glory." [illegible] when "this corruptible hath put on incorruption," the powers of the soul will be all invigorated: and [illegible]ly tabernacles, "transformed into a likeness with CHR[illegible]s "glorious body."—Then, though † the "moon [illegible]all "confounded, and the sun ashamed," when the L[illegible] Hosts is revealed from heaven; yet, shall his faithful pe[illegible] be enabled to *see him as he is*.

HERE then, my wishes, here, be fixed: be *this* your determined and invariable aim: here, give a loose to [illegible] whole ardour: cry out, all that is within me, in the language of inspiration, *this one thing have I desired of t*[illegible] LORD, *which*, with incessant earnestness, *I will requi*[illegible] *that I may dwell in the* celestial *house of the* L[illegible] *a*[illegible] *days of my* future *life; to behold the fair beau*[illegible] LORD, and to contemplate, with wonder and adoration—

M

* *Isaiah* represents the felicity of the righteous, in the everlasting world, by this elegant and amiable image; *thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty*. [illegible] touches the same subject, with a surprising elevation and majesty of thought; they

—— *walk with* GOD,
High in salvation, and the climes of bliss:—

Words, which, like the fiery car, almost transport our affections to those glorious mansions.

Isai. xxxiii. 17.——MILTON, B. XI. v. 707.

† Isai. xxiv. 23.

with unspeakable and everlasting rapture—all the attributes of the incomprehensible Godhead.

SOLOMON, a most penetrating judge of human nature, knowing how much mankind is charmed, with the fine qualities of flowers; has figured out the blessed Jesus, that "fairest among ten thousand," by these lovely representatives. He stiles him * *the Rose of Sharon*, and *the Lily of the vallies*;† like the one, full of delights, and communicable graces; like the other, exalted in majesty, and complete in beauty. In that sacred pastoral, he ranges the creation; borrows its most finished forms; and dips his pencil in its choicest dyes, to present us with a sketch of the amiablenes of his person: His amiableness who is the light of the world; the glory of his church; the only hope, the sovereign consolation of sinners? and high, infinitely high, not only above the noblest comparison, but even "above all blessing and praise."—May I also make the same heavenly use, of all sublunary enjoyments! whatever is pleasurable, or charming *below*; let it raise my desires to those sublime delights, which are *above*: which will yield, not partial, but perfect, felicity; not transient, but never-ending, satisfaction and joy.—Yes, my soul, let these beauties in *miniature*, always remind thee of that glorious Person; in whom "dwells all the *fulness* of the Godhead "bodily." Let these little emanations, teach thee to thirst after the eternal Fountain: O! may the creatures be thy constant clue to the Creator! for this is a certain truth, worthy thy most frequent recollection, and attentive con-

* C[illegible] ii. 1.

[illegible] apples in the wood,
[illegible] as the [illegible] h afford's delicious food,
[illegible] when perfumes it doth exhale,
[illegible] is the lily which is blooming in the vale,
Is Christ the Redeemer.

† By the *lily of the vall[illegible]*, I apprehend, is meant, not the flower which commonly passes under that denomination, and is comparatively mean, but the grand, majestic garden-lily, growing in a rich irriguous soil, where it flourishes in the most ample manner, and arrives at the highest perfection. The circumstance of the *vallies*, added by the sacred writer, is significant not of the *[illegible]*, but of the *place*.—This is, by far, the noblest interpretation, and most exactly suitable to the spiritual sense, which intimates, that the blessed Jesus delights to dwell, by the communications of his spirit, in *humble* hearts.

sideration; that the *whole compass* of finite perfection, is only a faint *ray*,* shot from that immense *source*; is only a small *drop*, derived from that inexhaustible *Ocean*; of all Good.

WHAT a surprising *variety* is observable, among the flowery tribes! how has the bountiful hand of Providence, diversified these nicest pieces of his workmanship! added the charms of an endless novelty, to all their other perfections!—Because, a constant *uniformity* would soon render the entertainment tiresome, or insipid; therefore, every species exhibits something intirely *new*. The fashion spreads not from family to family; but every one has a mode of its own, which is truly original. The most cursory glance, perceives an apparent difference, as well as a peculiar delicacy, in the *airs* and *habits*; the *attitude* and *lineaments*; of every distinct class.

SOME rear their heads, with a majestic mien; and overlook, like *sovereigns* or *nobles*, the whole parterre. Others seem more moderate in their aims, and advance only to the middle stations; a genius turned for heraldry, would term them, the *gentry* of the border. While others, free from all aspiring views, creep unambitiously on the ground, and look like the *commonalty* of the kind.—Some are intersected with elegant *stripes*, or studded with radiant *spots*. Some affect to be genteelly *powdered*, or neatly *fringed*; while others are plain in their aspect, unaffected in their dress, and content to please with a naked *simplicity*. Some assume the monarch's *purple*; some look most becoming in the virgin's *white*; but *black*, doleful black, has no admittance into the wardrobe of spring. The weeds of mourning would be a manifest indecorum, when nature holds an universal festival. She would, now, inspire none but delightful ideas; and therefore always makes her appearance,

* —— Thou sitt'st above all heav'ns,
To us invisible, or *dimly seen*
In these thy lowest works; yet these declare
Thy goodness beyond thought, and pow'r divine.

MILTON, B. V.

in some * amiable suit.—Here, *stands* a *warrior* clad with crimson; there, *sits* a *magistrate* robed in scarlet; and yonder, *struts* a *pretty fellow*, that seems to have dipped his plumes in the rainbow, and glitters in all the gay colours of that resplendent arch. Some *rise* into a curious *cup*, or *fall* into a set of beautiful *bells*: some *spread* themselves in a swelling *tuft*, or *croud* into a delicious *cluster*. In some, the predominant stain, *softens* by the gentlest *diminutions*; till it has even stole away from itself. The eye is amused at the agreeable delusion; and we wonder, to find ourselves insensibly decoyed, into a quite different lustre. In others, you would think, the fine tinges were emulous of pre-eminence: disdaining to mingle, they *confront* one another, with the resolution of *rivals*, determined to dispute the prize of beauty; while each is improved, by the opposition, into the highest vivacity of complexion.

How manifold are thy works † O LORD! multiplied even to a prodigy. Yet *in wisdom*, consummate wisdom, *hast thou made them all*.—How I admire the *vastness* of the contrivance, and the *exactness* of the execution! Poor man, with difficulty, accomplishes a single work. Hardly, and after many efforts, does he arrive at a tolerable imitation, of some one production of nature. But, the Almighty artist spoke millions of substances, into instantaneous being; all wonderfully various, all completely perfect.—Repeated experiments generally discover errors, in *our* happiest invention. But *these* fine structures have pleased, for almost six thousand years; and no ‡ fault been discovered in the original plan, no room for the least improvement upon the first model.—All our performances, the more *minutely* they are scanned, the more *imperfect* they appear. But, with regard to these delicate objects, the more we search into their properties, the more we are ravished with their graces: they are sure to disclose *fresh strokes*, of the most masterly

* The year displays its greatest beauty now.——VIRGIL.

† Psalm civ. 24.

‡ Eccles. iii. 14. I know, that whatsoever GOD doth, it shall be for ever; nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it.

skill; in proportion to the *attention*, with which they are examined.

NOR is the *simplicity* of the *operation* less astonishing, than the accuracy of the workmanship, or the infinitude of the effects. Should you ask, "where, and what, are the "materials, that beautify the blooming world? What "rich tints; what splendid dyes; what stores of shining "crions; stand by the heavenly Limner, when he paints the robe of nature?" 'Tis answered, His powerful pencil needs no costly apparatus. A single principle, under his conducting hand, branches out into an immensity of the most varied, and most finished forms. The *moisture* of the *earth*, passed through proper strainers, and disposed in a range of pellucid tubes:—this performs all the wonders, and produces all the beauties, of vegetation. This *creeps* along the fibres of the low-spread moss; and *climbs* to the very tops, of the lofty-waving cedars. This, attracted by the root, circulating through invisible canals, and pervading the substance of the minutest twigs, *bursts* into gems; *expands* itself into leaves; and *cloathes* the forest, with all its verdant honors.—This one,* *plain* and *simple*, cause gives birth to all the charms; which deck the youth, and maturity, of the year. This *blushes*, in the early hepatica; and *flames*, in the late-advancing poppy. This *reddens* into blood, in the veins of the mulberry; and *attenuates* itself into leafen gold, to create a covering for the quince. This *breathes*, in all the fragrant gales of our gardens; and *weeps* odorous gum, in the groves of *Arabia*.—So † *wonderful* is our Creator *in counsel*, and so *excellent in working!*

IN a grove of tulips, or a knot of pinks, one perceives a difference in almost every individual. Scarce any two, are turned, and tinctured, exactly alike. Each allows

* "When every several effect has a particular separate cause, this gives no pleasure to the spectator, as not discovering contrivance. But that work is beheld with admiration and delight, as the result of deep counsel, which is *complicated* in its *parts*, and yet *simple* in its *operation*. Where a great variety of effects are seen to arise from one principle operating uniformly."

ABERNETHY *on the Attributes*.

† Isai. xxviii. 29.

himself a little *particularity* in his *dress*, though all belong to one family: so that they are various, and yet the same.—A pretty emblem this, of the *smaller differences* between Protestant Christians. There are modes in religion, which admit of variation, without prejudice to sound faith, or real holiness.* Just as the drapery, on these pictures of the Spring, may be formed after a variety of patterns, without blemishing their beauty, or altering their nature.—Be it so then, that, in some points of inconsiderable consequence, several of our bretheren dissent: yet, let us all live amicably and sociably together; for we harmonize in *principals*, though we vary in *punctilios*. Let us join in conversation, and intermingle interests; discover no estrangement of behaviour, and cherish no alienation of affection. If any strife subsists, let it be to follow our Divine Master most closely, in humility of heart, and unblameableness of life. Let it be to serve one another most readily, in all the kind offices of a cordial friendship. Thus shall we be *united*, though *distinguished*; united in the same grand fundamentals, though distinguished by some small circumstancials; united in one important bond of brotherly love, though distinguished by some slighter peculiarities of sentiment.

BETWEEN Christians, whose judgements disagree only about a form of prayer, or manner of worship, I apprehend, there is no more *essential* difference; than between flowers which bloom from the same kind of seed, but happen to be somewhat diversified in the mixture of their colours. Whereas, if *one* denies the divinity of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, and degrades the incarnate GOD to the meanness of a mere creature; if *another* cries up the worthiness of human works,* and depreciates the alone-meritorious righteousness of the glorious Mediator: if a *third* addresses the incommunicable honors to a finite Being, and bows to the Image, or prays to the Saint.—These are errors, extremely derogatory to the REDEEMER'S dignity, and not a little prejudicial to the comfort of his people. Against these to remonstrate; against these to urge every argument, and use every dissuasive; bespeaks not the censorious bigot, but the friend of truth, and the lover of mankind.—Whereas, to stand neuter and silent, while such principles are propagated, would be an instance of criminal remissness, rather than of Christian

moderation.—For the *persons*, we will not fail to maintain a tender compassion: we will not cease to put up earnest intercessions: we will also acknowledge and love, whatever is excellent and amiable in their character. Yet, we dare not subscribe their *creed*; we cannot remit our assiduous, but kind endeavours; if by any means we may reconcile them to a more *scriptural* belief, and a *purer* worship.*

ANOTHER circumstance, recommending and endearing the flowery creation, is their regular succession. They make not their appearance all at once, but in an orderly rotation. While a proper number of these obliging retainers are in waiting, the others abscond; but hold themselves in a posture of service, ready to take their turn, and fill each his respective station, the instant it becomes vacant.—The *snowdrop*, foremost of the lovely train, breaks her way through the frozen soil, in order to present her early compliments to her Lord. Dressed in the robe of innocency, she steps forth, fearless of danger; long before the trees have ventured to unfold their leaves, even while the icicles are pendent on our houses.—Next, peeps out the crocus; but cautiously, and with an air of timidity. She hears the howling blasts, and skulks close to her low situation. Afraid she seems, to make large excursions from her root; while so many ruffian winds are abroad, and scouring along the æther.—Nor is the *violet* last, in this shining embassy of the year. Which, with all the embellishments, that would grace a royal garden, condescends to line our hedges, and grow at the feet of briars. Freely, and without any solicitation, she distributes the bounty of her emissive sweets: while herself, with an exemplary humility, retires from sight; seeking rather to admininister pleasure, than to win admiration.† Emblem, expressive emblem,

* In some former editions, I expressed myself, on this point, *unwarily* and *harshly*. But my meaning, and real sentiments, were no other than those represented above.—The reader, from those unguarded intimations, might too naturally be led to conclude, that the author avows, and would stir up, a spirit of *persecution*. But, this is a method of dealing with opponents in religious doctrines, which he disclaims, as absurd; and abhors, as iniquitous. He is for no force but that of *rational conviction*; for no constraint, but that of *affectionate persuasion*. This, if you please, *compel them to come in*. Luke xiv. 23.

† The violet seeks our good, and not our praise.

of those *modest* virtues, which delight to bloom in obscurity: which extend a chearing influence to multitudes, who are scarce acquainted with the source of their comforts! motive, engaging motive, to that *ever-active* beneficence; which stays not for the importunity of the distressed, but anticipates their suit, and prevents them with the blessings of its goodness!—The poor *polyanthus*, that lately adorned the border with her sparkling beauties; and, transplanted into our windows, gave us a fresh entertainment; is now no more. I saw her complexion fade; I perceived her breath decay; till at length she expired, and dropt into her grave.—Scarce have we sustained this loss, but in comes the *auricula*, and more than retrieves it. Arrayed she comes, in a splendid variety of amiable forms; with an eye of crystal, and garments of the most glossy sattin; exhaling perfume, and powdered with silver. A very distinguished procession this! the favourite care of the florist! scarce one among them, but is dignified with a character of renown; or has the honor to represent, some celebrated toast. But these also, notwithstanding their illustrious titles, have exhausted their whole stock of fragrance, and are mingled with the meanest dust.—Who could forbear grieving at their departure, did not the tulips begin to raise themselves on their fine wands, or stately stalks? they flush the parteree with one of the gayest dresses, that blooming nature wears. Did ever beau or belle make so gaudy an appearance, in a birth-night suit? Here, one may behold the innocent wantonness of beauty. Here, she indulges a thousand freaks, and sports herself in the most charming diversity of colours. Yet, I should wrong her, were I call her a coquet; because, she plays her lovely changes, not to enkindle dissolute affections, but to display her Creator's glory.—Soon arises the anemone; incircled at the bottom, with a spreading robe; and rounded, at the top, into a beautiful dome. In its loosely-flowing mantle, you may observe a noble negligence; in its gently bending tufts, the nicest symmetry. I would term it the fine [illegible] of the garden; because, it seems to have learnt singular address, of uniting simplicity with refinement, reconciling art and ease.—The same month has the merit of producing the ranunculus. All bold and graceful, it

expands the riches of its foliage; and acquires, by degrees, the loveliest enamel in the world. As persons of *intrinsic* worth, disdain the *superficial* arts of recommendation, practised by *fops*; so, this lordly flower scorns to borrow any of its excellence, from powders and essences. It needs no such attractives, to render it the darling of the curious; being sufficiently engaging from the elegance of its figure, the radiant variety of its tinges, and a certain superior dignity of aspect.—Methinks, nature improves in her operations: her latest strokes are most masterly: to crown the collection, she introduces the *carnation*; which captivates every eye, with a noble spread of graces; and charms another sense, with a profusion of exquisite odours. This single flower has, centred in itself, the perfections of all the preceding: The moment it appears, it so commands our attention, that we scarce regret the absence of the rest.—The *gilly-flower*, like a *real friend*, attends you through all the vicissitudes and alterations of the season: while others make a transient visit only, this is rather an inhabitant, than a guest, in your gardens; adds *fidelity* to *complaisance*.

But, 'tis in vain to attempt a catalogue, of these amiable gifts: there is an endless *multiplicity*, in their *characters*; and an invariable *order*, in their *approaches*. Every month brings its ornaments; such as are different from the rest, and peculiar to itself.

Here, let me stand awhile, to contemplate the wise and gracious *design*; apparent in this *distribution* of flowers, through the several periods of the year.—Were they all to blossom together; there would be at once a promiscuous *throng*, and at once a total *privation*: so that we should scarce have opportunity, of adverting to the beauties of half; and must soon lose the agreeable company, of them all. But now, since every species has a separate post to occupy: and a distinct time for appearing, we can take a leisurely and minute survey, of each succeeding set.—We can view and review their forms; taste their sweets; enter into a more intimate acquaintance, with their charming qualities; and receive all those pleasing services, which

they are commissioned to yield.—This remarkable piece of oeconomy, is productive of another very valuable effect. It not only places, in the most *advantageous light*, every particular community; but also is the most effectual *provision*, against the *frailty* of the whole nation: or, to speak more truly, it renders them a sort of * *immortal corps*, whose successionary attendance never fails. For though some are continually dropping; yet, by this expedient, others are as continually rising, to beautify our borders, and keep up the entertainment unintermitted.

O! WHAT *goodness* is this, to provide such a series of gratifications for mankind! both to diversify, and perpetuate, the fine collation: to take care, that our paths should be, in a manner, incessantly strewed with flowers:—and what *wisdom*, to bid every one of these insensible beings, know the precise juncture for their coming forth! insomuch, that no actor on a stage, can be more exact in performing his part; can make a more regular entry, or a more punctual exit.

Who imboldens the *daffodil*, to venture abroad in February; and to trust her flowering gold, with inclement and treacherous skies? Who informs the various tribes of *fruit-bearing blossoms*; that vernal suns, and a more genial warmth, are fittest for their delicate texture? Who teaches the *clove* to stay; till hotter beams are prepared, to infuse a spicy richness into her odours; and tincture her complexion, with the deepest crimson?—Who disposes these beautiful *troops*, into such orderly bodies; *retarding* some, and *accelerating* others? Who has instructed them to *file off*, with such perfect regularity; as soon as the duty of their respective station is over? And, when one detachment *retires*, who gives the signal, for another immediately to *advance*? Who, but that unerring Providence, which, from the highest thrones of angels, to the very lowest degrees of existence, orders all things in "number, weight, and measure!"

* "An allusion to the celebrated practice of the *Persian kings*, who maintained, for their life-guard, a body of troops, called *immortal*, because it perpetually subsisted; for as soon as any of [illegible] died, another was immediately put into his place."

Rollin's *Ancient* History. Vol. II.

These, O my soul, are the regulations of that most adorable, most beneficent Being, who in the fulness of time bowed the heavens; came down to dwell on earth; and united the *frailty* of thy mortal nature, to all the *glories* of his Godhead. All the honor of this admirable establishment, belongs to that ever blessed Ransomer of sinners; who sustained the vengeance, which thou hadst deserved, and wast doomed to suffer; who fulfilled the *obedience*, which thou wast *obliged*, but *unable*, to perform; and, in his most sacred immaculate humanity, humbled himself (O never enough to be admired loving-kindness!) humbled himself to death, even the death of the cross.—He formed this vast machine, and adjusted its nice dependencies.—The pillars, that support it; the embellishments, that adorn it: and the laws, that govern it; are the result of his unsearchable counsels. O! the *heights* of his *majesty*, and the *depths* of his *abasement!*

Which shall we admire most, his *essential greatness*, or his *free grace?* He created the exalted seraph, that sings in glory; and every the minutest insect, that flutters in air, or crawls in dust. He marks out a path, for all those globes of light, which travel the circuit of the skies; and disdains not to rear the violet from its lowly bed, or to plait the daisy that dresses our plains. So *grand* are his operations; yet so *condescending* his regards.—If *summer*, like a sparkling bride, is all glorious in her apparel; what is this, but a feeble reflection of his uncreated *effulgence?* If *autumn*, like a munificent host, exhibits all things richly to enjoy; what is this, but a little taste of his inexhaustible *liberality?* If thunders roar, you hear the sound of his trumpet: if lightnings glare, you see the launching of his glittering spear: if the "perpetual hills be scattered, and "the everlasting mountains bowed," you behold a *display* —No, says the prophet, you have rather * *the hiding of*

* *Hab.* iii. 4. Nothing can be more magnificently conceived, than the *imagery* of this whole chapter; and, upon the foot of our interpretation, nothing was ever more delicately and nobly turned, than the *sentiment* of this clause. Other senses of the passage, I acknowledge, may be assigned with equal propriety. But none, I think, can be imagined so *majestic* and *sublime*. As the original will fairly admit of it, as it carries no disagreement with the context; and expresses a most important, as well as undoubted truth; I

his power. So immense is his power; so uncontroulable and inconceivable; that all these mighty works are but a *sketch*, in which more is *concealed*, than discovered.

THUS, I think, we should always view the visible system; with an evangelical *telescope* (if I may be allowed the expression,) and with an evangelical *microscope:* regarding CHRIST JESUS, as the great projector and architect; that planned, and executed, the amazing scheme. Whatever is magnificent or valuable; tremendous or amiable; should ever be ascribed to the Redeemer. This, is the christian's *natural philosophy:* and, with regard to this method, of considering the things that are seen; we have an inspired apostle, for our preceptor and precedent. Speaking of CHRIST, he says, "thou LORD, in the beginning, "hast laid the foundations of the earth; and the heavens, "are the work of thy hands."—Did we carefully attend to this leading principle, in all our examinations of nature; it would, doubtless, be a most powerful means of *enkindling* our *love*, and * *strengthening* our *faith:* for, when I look round upon millions of noble substances, and carry with me this transporting reflection, "the Maker of them all, died on a cross for me;" how can I remain any longer indifferent? must not the *coldest* heart, begin to *glow* with gratitude?—When I survey an immensity of the finest productions imaginable; and remember, that the Author of them all, is "my righteousness, my redemption; how can I choose but repose the most *chearful confidence*, in such a Mediator?

hope, I may be permitted to use it, at least by way of accommodation. Especially as it suggests [illegible] *no less imaginable*, wherewith to [illegible] all the visible productions, of [illegible]. When, struck with astonishment, we consider their grandeur, [illegible], and consummate perfections, let us, in justice to their author, apply the exalted [illegible] of this sacred ode. "In all these is the *hiding*, rather than an *adequate* "*display*, of his matchless *power*: tho' they challenge our praise, and surpass our com"prehension, yet are they by no means the utmost exertions, but rather some slighter "essays, of omnipotent skill."

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* The apostles, I observe, delight to use this method, of displaying the *honors* of the *Redeemer*, and establishing the *faith* of his *people*.—The beloved disciple, teaching that most precious doctrine, "of a Lamb slain to take away the sins of the world;" in order to evince the sufficiency of CHRIST's sacrifice for this blessed purpose, affirms, that *all things were made by him: and without him was not any thing*, no, not so much as one single being, *made*, John i. 3.

Let me add one more remark, upon the admirable *adjustment* of every particular, relating to these fine colonies planted in the parterre.—With such accuracy and correctness, is their structure finished: that any the least conceivable alteration, would very much impair their perfection. Should you see, for instance, the nice disposition of the *tulip's* attire fly abroad, disorderly and irregular, like the flaunting *woodbine*: should the *jessamine* rear her diminutive head, on those grand columns which support the *hollihock*: should the erect and manly aspect of the *piony*, hang down with a pensive air, like the flexile bells of the *hyacinth*: should that noble plainness, which distinguishes the *lily*, be exchanged for the glittering fringes, which edge the *pink*; or the gaudy stains, which bedrop the *iris*: should those tapering pillars, which arise in the middle of the vase, and, tipt with golden pendants, give such a lustre to the surrounding panels of alabaster.—Should those sink and disappear, like the chives which cover the heart of the anemone:—In many of these cases, would not the transposition be fantastical and aukward? in all, to the apparent *prejudice* of every individual?

Again; with regard to the *time* of their appearing; this circumstance is settled, by a remarkable foresight and precaution.

What would become of the *sailor*; if, in very stormy weather, he should raise a lofty mast, and croud it with all his canvass! such would be the ill effect; if the most stately species of flowers, should presume to come abroad, in the blustering months. Ah! how would they rue the imprudent boldness! therefore, those only that shoot the shortest stems, and display the smallest spread of leaves, or (if you please) carry the least sail, are launched amidst the blowing seasons.—How injudiciously would the *perfumer* act; if he should unseal his finest essences, and expose them to the northern winds, or wintry rains! Our blooming artists of the aromatic profession, at least the most delicate among them, seem perfectly aware of the consequences of such a procedure. Accordingly, they postpone the opening of their odoriferous treasures, till a

serener air, and more * unclouded skies, grant a protection to their amiable traffic: till they are under no more apprehensions, of having their spicy cells rifled by rude blasts, or drowned in incessant showers!

What a striking argument is here for *resignation;* unfeigned resignation, to all the *disposals* of *Providence!* Too often are our dissatisfied thoughts, apt to find fault with divine dispensations; we tacitly arraign our Maker's conduct, or question his kindness with regard to ourselves: we fancy our lot, not so commodiously situate; or our condition, not so happily circumstanced; as if we had been placed in some other station of life.—But, let us behold this exquisitely nice *regulation* of the *minutest* plants; and be ashamed of our *repining folly.* Could any fibre in their composition, be altered; or one line in their features, be transposed; without clouding some of their beauties? Could any fold in their vestments, be varied; or any link in their orderly succession be broken; without injuring some delicate property? And does not that All-seeing eye, which preserves so exact a harmony, among these *pretty toys;* maintain as watchful a care, over his *rational creatures?*—Does he choose the properest season, for the cowslip to arise, and drink the dews? And can he *neglect* the concerns, or *misjudge* the conveniencies, of his sons and daughters? He, who has so completely disposed, whatever pertains to the vegetable oeconomy; that the least di-

* *Casimire,* in a very poetical manner, addresses himself to the *dormant* rose, and most gracefully animates her to *venture abroad,* by the mention of these two circumstances,

Child of the summer, charming rose,
No longer in confinement lie:
Arise to light, thy form disclose;
Rival the spangles of the sky.

The *rains* are gone, the *storms* are o'er;
Winter retires to make thee way;
Come then, thou sweetly-blushing flow'r;
Come, lovely stranger, come away.

The *sun* is dress'd in beaming *smiles,*
To give thy beauties to the day;
Young *zephyrs* wait, with gentlest *gales,*
To fan thy bosom, as they play.

mination, or addition, would certainly hurt the finished scheme; does, without all peradventure, preside, with equal attention, over the interests of his own people.

Be still, then, thou uneasy mortal;* know, that GOD is unerringly wise; and be assured, that, amidst the greatest multiplicity of beings, he does not overlook thee. Thy Saviour has given me authority to assert, that thou art of far superior value, in the estimate of Omnipotence, than all the herbage of the field.—If his sacred will, ordains *sickness* for thy portion; never dare to imagine, that uninterrupted health would be more advantageous. If he pleases to with-hold, or take away, *children;* never presume to conclude, that thy happiness is blasted, because thy hopes of an increasing family are disappointed. He, that marshals all the starry host, and so accurately arranges every th... meanest species of herbs; HE orders all the *peculiarities*, all the *changes* of thy state, with a vigilance, that nothing can elude; with a goodness, that endureth for ever. —Bow thy head, therefore, in humble acquiescence: rest satisfied, that *whatever is*, by the appointment of heaven, *is right*, is best.

AMONG all the productions of the third creating-day, this of flowers seems to be peculiarly designed for man: a present, calculated in an especial manner. for his use, and delight. Man has, as it were, the *monopoly* of this favour; and scarce shares the satisfaction, resulting from it, with any other animal. I don't find, that other creatures are smit with their beauties, or regaled with their odours.—

* Since all the downward tracts of time
  GOD's watchful eye surveys,
O. who so wise to choose our lot,
  And regulate our ways?

Since none can doubt his equal love,
  Unmeasurably kind;
To his *unerring, gracious* will,
  Be ev'ry wish resign'd.

Good when he gives, supremely good;
  Nor less, when he denies;
Ev'n crosses, from his sov'reign hand,
  Are blessings in disguise.

The horse never stands still, to gaze upon their charms; nor does the ox turn aside, to browze upon their sweets. Senses they have, to discern these curious objects in the *grass;* but no taste, to *distinguish* their fine accomplishments.—Just so, *carnal* and unenlightened men, may understand the *literal* meaning of scripture; may comprehend the evidences of its divine inspiration; and yet have no *relish* of the heavenly truths, it teaches; no ardent *longing* for the spiritual blessings, it offers; see " no form or comeliness" in the Saviour, it describes, so as to render him the *supreme desire* of their souls.

THE *chief* end of these beautiful appearances, philosophers say, is to enfold and cherish the embryo seed; or to swathe the tender body, during its infant state.—But, whatever is the chief end of nature; 'tis certain she never departs from the design, of administering *delight* to mankind. This is inseperably connected with her other views. Were it only to secure a re-productive principle, what need of such *elegant complications?* why so much art employed, and so many decorations added? why such vestments be prepared, richer than brocades; more delicate than lawns; and of a finer glow, than the most admired velvets?—If the great mother had no aim, than barely to accommodate her little offspring; warm flannel, or homely fustian, would have served her turn. Served it, full as well as the most sumptuous tissues, or all the furniture of the mercer's shop.

EVIDENT then it is, that flowers were endued with such enchanting graces, for the *pleasure* of *man*. In pursuance of this original intention, they have always paid their court to the human race; they still seem particularly solicitous of recommending themselves to our regard. The finest of each species crowd about our habitations; and are rarely to be seen, at a distance from our aboads. They *thrive* under our cultivating hand, and observing eye; but degenerate, and *pine away*, if unregarded by their Lord.—To win his attention, and deck his retreats, they hide their deformities under ground; and display nothing but the most *graceful* forms and *engaging* colours, to his sight.—To merit a farther degree of his esteem, the generality of them dispense a delightful perfume. What is still more obliging,

they * reserve their *richest* exhalations, to embalm his morning and evening walks.† Because he usually chooses those cool hours, to recreate himself among their blooming ranks; therefore, at those hours, they are most lavish of their fragrance, and breathe out their choicest spirits.

O MAN, greatly beloved by thy Creator! the darling of Providence! thou art distinguished by *his goodness;* distinguish thyself also by *thy gratitude.* Be it thy one undivided aim, to glorify him; who has been at so much expence, to gratify thee!—While all these inferior creatures, in *silent eloquence,* declare the glory of GOD, do thou lend them thy *tongue.* Be thou the high-priest of the mute creation: let their praises become vocal in thy songs.—Adore the supreme Benefactor, for the blessings he showers down upon every order of beings: adore him for numberless mercies, which are appropriated to thyself: but, above all, adore him, for that noble gift of a *rational,* and *immortal* soul.—This, constitutes us masters of the globe, and gives us the real enjoyment of its riches. This discovers ten thousand beauties, which otherwise had been lost; and renders them both a source of delights, and a nursery of devotion.—By virtue of this exalted principle, we are qualified to *admire* our Maker's *works,* and capable of *bearing* his illustrious *image:* bearing his illustrious image, not only when these ornaments of the ground, have resigned their honors; but, when the great origin of day, is extinguished in the skies; and all the flaming orbs on high, are put out in obscure daakness.—*Then* to survive; to survive the ruins of one world, and to enjoy GOD—to resemble GOD—to be

O

* ——— The flow'rs,
That open *now* their choicest bosom'd smells,
Reserv'd from night, and *kept for thee in store.*

MILTON

† The twining jasmine, and the blushing rose,
With lavish grace their *morning* scents disclose:
The smelling tub'rose and jonquil declare
The stronger impulse of an *ev'ning* air

PRIOR'S Sol.

"filled with all the fulness of GOD," in another—what a happiness, what an inestimable happiness, is this! Yet, *this* is thy privilege, (barter it not, for trifles of an hour!) this thy glorious prerogative, O man!

O! THE goodness, the *exuberant goodness* of GOD! I cannot forbear celebrating it once more, before I pass to another consideration.—How much should we think ourselves obliged, to a generous friend; that should *build* a stately edifice,* purely for our abode! But, how greatly would the obligation be increased; if the hand that built, should also *furnish* it! and not only furnish it, with all that is commodious and comfortable; but *ornament* it also, with whatever is splendid and delightful! *This*, has our most indulgent Creator done; in a manner infinitely surpassing all we could wish, or imagine.

THE *earth* is assigned us for a dwelling.—The skies are stretched over us, like a magnificent canopy, dyed in the purest azure; and beautified, now with pictures of floating silver, now with colourings of reflected crimson.—The *grass* is spread under us, as a spacious carpet; wove with silken threads of green, and damasked with flowers of every hue.—The *sun*, like a golden lamp, is hung out in the ethereal vault; and pours his effulgence, all the day, to lighten our paths.—When night approaches, the *moon* takes up the friendly office; and the *stars* are kindled in twinkling myriads, to cheer the darkness with their milder lustre, nor disturb our repose by too intense a glare.—The *clouds*, besides the rich paintings they hang around the heavens, act the part of a shifting screen; and defend us, by their seasonable interposition, from the scorching beams of summer: may we not also regard them, as the great watering-pots of the globe? which, wafted on the wings

* I cannot persuade myself, that the comparison is stretched beyond proper bounds, or carried to the highest pitch. It is my stedfast opinion, that the world, at least this lower world, with its various appurtenances, was intended *purely* for man; that it is *appropriated* to him; and that he (in subordination to GOD's glory) is the *end* of its creation—other animals, 'tis true, partake of the Creator's benefits; but then, they partake under the notion of man's domestics, or on the foot of retainers to him; as creatures that bear some relation to his service, and some way or other contribute to his good. So that still he is the *centre* of the whole; or, as our incomparable *Milton*, equally master of poetry and divinity, expresses himself, *all things live for man*. Par. Lost, XI. 161.

of the wind, dispense their moisture * evenly through the universal garden; and fructify, with their showers, whatever our hand plants.—The *fields* are our exhaustless granary.—The *ocean* is our vast reservoir.—The *animals* spend their strength, to dispatch our business; resign their cloathing, to replenish our wardrobe; and surrender their very lives, to provide for our tables.—In short, every *element* is a store-house of conveniencies; every *season* brings us the choicest productions; all *nature* is our caterer.—And, what is a most endearing recommendation of these favours, they are all as *lovely* as they are *useful*. You observe nothing mean or inelegant. All is clad in *beauty's* fairest robe,† and regulated by *proportion's* nicest *rule*. The whole scene, exhibits a fund of pleasures to the imagination; at the same time, that it more than supplies all our wants.‡

Therefore thou art *inexcusable*, O man, whosoever thou art, that *rebellest* against thy Maker. He surrounds thee, with unnumbered benefits; and follows thee with an effusion of the richest, noblest gifts. He courts thy affections; he solicits thy gratitude; by liberalities which are never intermitted; by a bounty which knows no limits.—O! most blessed Lord, let this thy goodness, thy unwearied goodness, lead us to repentance. *Win* us to thyself, thou Fountain of Felicity, by these sweet *inducements*. *Draw* us to our duty, thou God of our salvation, by these "*cords* of love."

What a living picture is here, of the *beneficial* effects of *industry*! By industry and cultivation, this neat spot is an

* This circumstance, amidst abundance of other noble and delicate remarks upon the wonders of nature, is finely touched in the philosophical transactions recorded in the book of *Job*, chap. xxxviii. ver. 25. *Who hath divided a water-course for the overflowing of waters?*—The Hebrew is so pregnant and rich with sense, that no *translation* can do it justice.

† Perhaps, it was from such an observation, that the *Greeks*, those critical and refined judges of things, expressed the *Mundane system* by a word, which signifies beauty.

‡ "Those several living creatures, which are made for our service or sustenance, at "at the same time either fill the woods with their music, furnish us with game, or raise "pleasing ideas in us by the delightfulness of their appearance. Fountains, lakes, and "rivers, are as refreshing to the imagination, as to the soil through which they pass."

Spect. Vol. V. No. 387.

image of *Eden*. Here, is all that can entertain the eye, or* regale the smell: whereas, without cultivation, this sweet garden had been a desolate wilderness: vile thistles had made it loathsome, and tangling briars inaccessible. Without cultivation, it might have been a nest for serpents, and the horrid haunt of venomous creatures. But, the spade and pruning-knife, in the hand of industry, have improved it into a sort of terrestrial paradise.

How naturally does this lead our contemplation, to the *advantages*, that flow from a virtuous *education*; and the *miseries*, that ensue from the † *neglect* of it!—The mind, without early institution, must, in all probability, become like the "vineyard of the sluggard." If left to the propensities of its own depraved will; what can we expect, but a most luxuriant growth of unruly appetites, which, in time, will break forth into all manner of scandalous irregularities? What?—but that *anger*, like a prickly thorn, arm the temper with an untractable moroseness: *peevishness*, like a stinging nettle, render the conversation forbidding: *avarice*, like some choaking weed, teach the fingers to gripe, and the hands to oppress: *revenge*, like some poisonous plant, replete with baneful juices, rankle in the breast, and meditate mischief to its neighbour: while unbridled *lusts*, like swarms of noisome insects, taint each rising thought; and render "every imagination of "the heart, only evil continually."—Such, are the usual products of savage nature! such, the furniture of the uncultivated soul!

Whereas, let the mind be put under the "nurture and "admonition of the Lord:" let a holy discipline, *clear* the soil: let sacred instructions, *sow* it with the best seed: let skill and vigilance, dress the rising shoots; direct the young *ideas*, how to spread; the wayward *passions*, how to move:—Then, what a different state of the inner man, will quickly take place? *Charity* will breathe her sweets,

* Every sweet perfume is her ——— Hor.

† In the wild waste, unnotic'd grows the fern,
And parching sunbeams dry away its heat
Hor.

and *Hope* expand her blossoms: the *personal* virtues display their graces, and the *social* ones their fruits: the sentiments become generous; the carriage endearing; the life honorable and useful.*

O! THAT *governors of families*, and *masters of schools*, would watch, with a conscientious solicitude, over the morals of their tender charge. What pity it is, that the advancing generation should lose these invaluable endowments, through any supineness in their instructors!—See! with what assiduity, the *curious florist* attends his little nursery; visits them early and late; furnishes them with the properest mold; supplies them, with seasonable moisture, guards them from the ravages of insects; screens them, from the injuries of the weather; marks their springing buds, observes them attentively, through their whole progress, and never intermits his anxiety, till he beholds them blown into full perfection.—And, shall a *range of painted leaves*, that flourish to-day, and to-morrow fall to the ground—Shall these be tended, with more zealous application, than the noble *faculties* of an *immortal soul?*

YET trust not in cultivation *alone;* 'tis the blessing of the *Almighty* husbandman, that imparts *success* to such labours of love. If GOD "seal up the bottles of heaven," and command the clouds to with-hold their fatness, the best manured plot becomes a barren desert. And, if HE restrain the dew of his heavenly benediction, all human endeavours miscarry; the rational plantation languishes; and our most pregnant hopes, from youths of the most promising genius prove abortive. *Their root will be as rottenness, and their blossom will go up as dust* †—Therefore, let *pa-*

* If with the tender bud the virtues grow,
In years mature they will most richly flow.

VIRGIL.

The principles we imbibe, and the habits we contract, in our early years, are not matters of *small moment*, but of the *utmost consequence* imaginable. They not only give a transient or superficial *tincture*, to the *first* appearance in life; but most commonly *stamp* the *form*, of our *whole* future conduct, and even of our *eternal* state

† Isai v 24.

rents plant; let *tutors* water; but, let both look up to the Father of *spirits*, for the desired increase.

On every side, I espy several *budding* flowers. As yet, they are closely convolved, and wrapt within a strong inclosure. All their beauties lie concealed, and their sweets locked up.—Just such is the *niggardly wretch*; whose aims are all turned inward, and meanly terminated upon *himself:* who makes his own private interests, or personal pleasures, the sole centre of his designs, and the scanty circumference of all his actions.

But, ere-long, the searching beams will open these silken *folds*, and draw them into a graceful *expansion*. Then what a lovely blush, will glow in their cheeks; and what a balmy odour, exhale from their bosoms!—So, when divine grace shines upon the mind, even *the churl becomes bountiful:* the heart of stone is taken away; and a heart of flesh, a heart susceptible of the softest, most compassionate emotions, is introduced in its stead. O! how sweetly do the social affections dilate themselves, under so benign an influence! just like these disclosing gems, under the powerful eye of day. The tender regards, are no longer *confined* to a single object; but *extend* themselves into a generous concern for mankind, and shed liberal refreshments on all within their reach.*

ARISE then, thou Son of Righteousness, arise, with healing under thy wings; and transfuse thy gentle, but penetrating ray, through all our intellectual powers. Enlarge every *narrow* disposition, and fill us with a diffusive benevolence. Make room in our breasts, for the whole human race; and teach us to love all our fellow-creatures, for their amiable Creator's sake. May we be pleased with their excellencies, and rejoice in their happiness; but feel their their miseries as our own, and, with a brother's sympathy to relieve them!

DISPOSED at proper distances, I observe a range of strong and *stately stalks*. They stand like towers, along the walls

* How beautiful is the *idea*, and how significant the *expression*, in that fine passage of the prophet; where, describing the *charitable temper*, he says. *If thou draw out thy soul to the hungry!*— which, I think, may very properly be illustrated by the circumstance observed above.

of a fortified city; or rise like lofty spires, amidst the group of houses. They part, at the top, into several pensile spiky pods. From each of which, we shall soon see a fine figure displaying itself; *rounded* into a form, which constitutes a perfect circle; *spread wide* open, into the most frank and communicative air; and tinged with the colour, which is so peculiarly captivating to the miser's eye.

But the property I chiefly admire, is its passionate *fondness for the sun*. When the evening shades take place, the poor flower droops, and folds up its leaves. It mourns all the long night, and pines amidst the gloom, like some forlorn lover banished from the object of his affections. No sooner does Providence open "the eyelids of the morning," but it meets* and welcomes the returning light; courts and caresses it, all the day; nor ever loses sight of the refulgent charmer, so long as he continues above the horizon! in the morning, you may perceive it, presenting a golden bosom to the East; at noon, it points upward, to the middle sky; in the evening, follows the same attractive influence to the West.

Surely, nature is a book, and every page rich with sacred hints. To an attentive mind, the *garden* turns *preacher*; and its blooming renants, are so many lively sermons. What an engaging pattern, and what an excellent lesson, have we here!—*So*, let the redeemed of the Lord *look unto* Jesus,† and be conformed to their beloved. Let us be *heliotropes* (if I may use the expression) to the *sun of righteousness*. Let our passions rise and fall; take this course or that; as his word determines, as his holy example guides. Let us be so accommodated, both to his commanding and providential will, as the wax is turned to the imprinted seal; or, as the aspect of this enamoured flower, to the splendid star, which creates our day.

In every *enjoyment*, O thou watchful christian, look unto Jesus; receive it as proceeding from his love, and pur-

* Which way soe'er its stem, its root inclines,
The sun attracts, and still its head confines.

Ovid.

† Heb. xii 2.

chased by his agonies*. In every *tribulation* look unto JESUS; mark his gracious hand, managing the scourge, or mingling the bitter cup; attempering it to a proper degree of severity; adjusting the time of its continuance; and ready to make these seeming disasters, productive of real good.—In every infirmity and *failing*, look unto JESUS, thy merciful High-Priest; pleading his atoning blood; and making intercession for transgressors. In every *prayer* look unto JESUS, thy prevailing advocate; recommending thy devotions, and, "bearing the iniquity of thy holy "things †."—In every *temptation*, look unto JESUS, the author of thy strength, and captain of thy salvation; who alone is able to lift up the hands which hang down, to envigorate the enfeebled knees, and make thee more than conqueror over all thy enemies.—But, especially, when the *hour* of thy *departure* approaches; when "thy flesh and "thy heart fail;" when all the springs of life are irreparably breaking; *then* look unto JESUS with a believing eye ‡. Like expiring *Stephen*, behold him standing at the right-hand of GOD, on purpose to succour his people, in this their last extremity. Yes, my christian friend; when thy journey through life is finished, and thou art arrived on the very verge of mortality: when thou art just launching out into the invisible world, and all before thee is vast eternity; then, O then, be sure to look stedfastly unto JESUS! "see "by faith the LORD'S CHRIST." View him, as the only *way*,§ to the everlasting mansions; as the only *door*, ‖ to the abodes of bliss.

YONDER tree, which faces the south, has something too remarkable, to pass without observation.—Like the fruit-

* He sunk beneath our heavy woes,
To raise us to his throne
There's not a gift his hand bestows,
But cost his heart a groan

WATTS.

† Exod. xxviii. 38.

‡ *Look unto ME, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.* Isai. xlv. 22.

§ John xiv. 6 ‖ John x. 9.

ful, though feeble vine, she brings forth a large family of branches: but, unable to support them herself, commits them to the tuition of a sunny wall As yet, the tender twigs have scarce gemmed their future blossoms. However, I may anticipate the well-known productions; and picture to myself the *passion-flower*. Which will, in due time; with a long and copious succession, adorn the boughs.

I HAVE read in a *Latin* author, of flowers inscribed with the names of kings‡; but here is one, imblazoned with the marks of the bleeding Prince of life. I read, in the inspired writings, of apostolic men; who bore about in their bodies, the dying of the LORD JESUS §: but, here is a *blooming religioso*, that carries apparent memorials of the same tremendous and fatal catastrophe.—Who would have expected to find such a tragedy of woe, exhibited in a collection of the most delicate delights? or to see *Calvary's* horrid scene, pourtrayted on the softest ornaments of the garden?—Is nature then actuated by the noble ambition, of paying *commemorative* honors, to her agonizing Sovereign? is she kindly officious to *remind* forgetful mortals, of that miracle of mercy; which it is their duty to contemplate, and their happiness to believe?—Or, is a *sportive* imagination my interpreter; and all the supposed resemblance, no more than the precarious gloss of fancy? be it so: yet even fancy has her merit, when she sets forth, in such pleasing imagery, the crucified JESUS. Nor shall I refuse a willing regard, to imagination herself; when she employs her creative powers, to revive the sense of such unparalled love, and prompt my gratitude to so divine a friend.

THAT *spiral tendril*, arising from the bottom of the stalk; is it a representation of the *scourge*, which lashed the Redeemer's unspotted flesh; and inflicted those stripes, by which our souls are healed? Or, is it twisted for the *cord*,

‡ Say in what clime, what land the flow'rs grow?
Which by the names of kings, we chiefly know?

VIRGIL.

§ 2 Cor. iv. 10.

which bound his hands, in painful and ignominious confinement: those beneficent hands, which were incessantly stretched out to unloose the heavy burthens; and to impart blessings of every choice kind?—Behold the *nails*, which were drenched in his sacred veins, and riveted his feet to the accursed tree: those beautiful * feet, which always went about doing good; and travelled far and near, to spread the glad tidings of everlasting salvation.—See the *hammer*, ponderous and massy, that drove the ragged irons through the racked nerves; that forced a passage for those dreadful wedges, between the dislocated bones.—View the *thorns*, which incircled our Royal Master's brow, and shot their keen afflictive points into his blessed head: that head, which was ever meditating peace to poor sinners; and spent many a wakeful night, in ardent prayer for their happiness. O the smart! the fiercely-throbbing smart! when, instead of the triumphal laurel, or the odoriferous garland, that pungent and wragged wreath, was planted on the meek Messiah's forehead! when rude and barbarous blows of the strong eastern cane,† struck the prickly crown, and fixed every thorn deep in his tender temples!‡—There stand the *disciples*, ranged in the green impalement; and forming a circle, round the instruments of their great Commander's torture. They stand wedged in firm battalion; and appear like so many faithful adherents, that breathe a gallant resolution; either of defending their LORD to the

* *How beautiful are the feet of Him, that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation!* Isai. lii. 7.

† *They took the reed*, says the sacred historian, *and smote him on the head*: "and so, as "it were, nailed down the thorns into his forehead and temples, and occasioned thereby "exquisite pain, as well as a great effusion of blood.——*Family Expositor*, Vol. II. Sect. 188.

‡ The smart, attending this unparalleled piece of contemptuous barbarity, must be *inexpressibly severe*; not only, on account of the many painful punctures made in the flesh; but principally, because the *periosteum*, a most exquisitely sensible tegument of the bones; lying, in those parts, very near the external skin, must receive a multitude of most terrible wounds. The anguish of which, could not fail of being inflamed to an excess of rage, by the continuance of so many thorny lancets, in that extremely tender membrane; which, in such a case,

——— tremblingly alive all o'er,
Must smart and agonize at ev'ry pore.

last extremity, or of dropping, in honorable deaths, by his side. O! that they had given such proofs of zeal and fidelity in their conduct, as their steady posture, and determined aspect, seem to promise! But, alas! what is human *firmness*, when destitute of succours from above, but an expiring *vaponr?* What is exery *saint*, if unsupported by powerful grace, but an abandoned *trator?*—Observe the *glory* delineated in rays of imperial purple. But ah! how incapable are threads, though spun by summer's finest hand; though dyed in snows, or dipped in heaven; to display the immaculate excellency of his human, or the ineffable majesty of his divine nature! Compared with these sublime perfections, the most *vivid* assemblage of colours, fades into an *unmeaning flatness;* the most charming effects of light and shade, are not only mere daubings, but an absolute blank.

AMONG all the beauties that shine in sunny robes, and sip the silver dews; *this*, I think, has the *noblest import*, if not the *finest presence*. Were they all to pass in review, and expect the *award* of *superiority* from my decision; I should not hesitate a moment. Be the prize assigned to this amiable candidate; which has so eminently distinguished, and so highly dignified herself, by bearing such a remarkable resemblance to "the righteous branch;* the "plant of renown."—While others appoint it a place in the *parterre;* I would transplant the passion-flower, or rather transfer its sacred significancy, to my *heart*. *There* let it bloom, both in summer and in winter; bloom, in the most impressive characters, and with an undecaying lustre. That I also may wear—wear on my very soul, the traces of IMMANUEL; pierced for my sins, and bruised for my transgressions. That I also may *be crucified with* CHRIST;† at least in penetential remorse, and affectionate sympathy. That I may *know the fellowship of his sufferings;*‡ and feel all my evil affections wounded by his agonies, mortified by his death.

* So the blessed JESUS is described by *Jerem.* xxiii. 5. by *Ezek.* xxxiv. 29.

† Gal. ii. 20. ‡ Phil. iii. 10.

THERE is another subject of the verdant kingdom, which makes so very uncommon a figure, as justly claims my particular notice.

One, so extremely *diffident* in her disposition, and *delicate* in her constitution; that she dares not venture herself abroad, in the open air: but is nursed up in the warmth of a *hot-bed*, and lives cloistered in the cells of a *green-house*.

BUT the most curious peculiarity, is, that of all her kindred species, she alone partakes of *perceptive life*; at least, advances nearest to this more exalted state of being; and may be looked on as the link, which connects the animal and the vegetable world.

A STRANGER, observing her qualities, would almost be induced to susspect; that she is endued with some interior degrees, of consciousness and caution. For, if you offer to handle this *sensitive plant*, she immediately takes the alarm; hastily contracts her fibres; and, like a person under apprehensions of violence, *withdraws* from your finger, in a kind of precipitate *disorder*. Perhaps, the beauty of her aspect might be sullied, or the niceness of her texture discomposed, by the human touch. Therefore, like a coy virgin, she keeps at a distance, from all unbecoming familiarities; and will admit no such improper, if not pernicious freedoms.

WHATEVER be the cause of this unusual effect; it suggests an instructive admonition, to the christian. *Such*, should be our *apprehensive*, *timorous* care, with regard to sin; and all, even the most *distant*, *approaches* of vice. We should avoid the very appearance of evil, and stand aloof from every occasion of falling.

IF sinners entice; if forbidden pleasures tempt; or if opportunity beckon, with the gain of injustice in her hand; fly from the gilded snare: fly with haste, fly without any delay, from the bewitching ruin.—Does *anger* draw near, with her lighted torch, to kindle the flame of resentment in our breasts? does *flattery* ply our ears, with her enchanting and intoxicating whispers? would *discontent* lay her leaden hand upon our tempers, and mould into our minds her sour leaven; in order to make us a burthen to ourselves, and unamiable to others? Instantly let us divert our at-

tention from the dangerous objects; and not so much endeavour to *antidote*, as to *shun*, the moral contagion. Let us revolve, in our meditations, that wonderful *meekness* of our distressed master; which, amidst the most abusive and provoking insults, maintained an uniform tenor of unshaken serenity. Let us contemplate that prodigious *humiliation;* which brought him, from an infinite height above all worlds, to make his bed in the dust of death. Let us soothe our jarring, our uneasy passions, by an attentive reflection on that *cheerfulness* and *resignation;* which rendered him, in the deepest poverty, unfeignedly thankful; and, under the heaviest tribulations, most submissively patient.

HARBOUR not, therefore, on any consideration, the betrayer of your virtue. Be deaf, inflexibly deaf, to the beguiling solicitation. If it obtrude into the unguarded heart; give it entertainment, no, not for a moment. To parly with the enemy, is to open a door for destruction. Our safety consists in flight: and, in this case, *suspicion* is the truest *prudence; fear*, the greatest *bravery.*—Play not on the brink of the precipice. Flutter not round the edges of the flame. But reject, with a becoming mixture of solicitude and abhorrence, the very first insinuations of iniquity: as cautiously, as the *smarting sore* shrinks even from the softest hand; as constantly, as this *jealous plant* recoils at the approaching touch.*

NOT long ago, these curious productions of the spring, were *coarse* and mis-shapen *roots.* Had we opened the earth, and beheld them in their seed; how uncouth and contemptible, had their appearance been!—But now, they are the *boast* of nature; the *delight* of the sons of men; finished patterns for enamelling and embroidery; outshining even the *happiest strokes* of the pencil. They are

* The prophet *Isaiah*, in an elegant and lively description of the *upright man*. says, *he shaketh his hands from holding of bribes:* and, I may add, from practising any kind of iniquity. The image, exceedingly beautiful, and equally expressive, both illustrates and enforces the doctrine of this whole section.—*Shaketh his hands;* just as a person would do who happens to have *burning coals* fall into his lap, or some *venomous creature* fastening upon his flesh. In such a case, none would stand a moment to consider; none would debate with himself, the expediency of the thing; but, instantly fling off the pernicious incumbrance, instantly endeavour to disengage himself, from the clinging mischief.——*Isai.* xxxiii. 15

taught to bloom, but with a very inferior lustre,* in the richest tapestries, and most magnificent silks. Art never attempts to *equal* their incomparable elegancies; but places all her merit in *copying* after these delicate originals. Even those, that glitter in silver, or whose cloathing is of wrought gold; are proud to borrow additional ornaments, from a sprig of jessamine, or a little assemblage of pinks.

WHAT a fine idea may we form, from hence, of the *resurrection* of the *just*, and the *state* of their reanimated *bodies!* As, the roots even of our choicest flowers, when deposited in the ground, are rude and ungraceful; but, when they spring up into blooming life, are most exquisitely elegant; so, the poor flesh of a saint, when committed to the dust, alas! what is it? a heap of corruption; a mass of putrefying clay. But, when it obeys the great archangel's call, and starts into renewed existence; O! what an astonishing change ensues! what a most prodigious improvement takes place!—That which was sown in *weakness*, will be raised in all the vivacity of *power*. That which was sown in *deformity*, will be raised in the bloom of celestial *beauty;* and shine "as the brightness of the "firmament," when it darts the inimitable blue, through the fleeces—the snowy fleeces, of some cleaving cloud.

FEAR *not*, then, thou faithful *christian;* fear not, at the appointed time, to *descend* into the *tomb*. Thy *soul* thou mayst trust with thy omnipotent Redeemer, who is LORD of the unseen world; "who has the keys of hell, and of "death." Most safely mayst thou trust thy better part, in those beneficent hands; which were pierced with nails, and fastened to the ignominious tree; for thy salvation.—And, with regard to thy *fleshy tabernacle*, be not dismayed; it is only taken down, to be rebuilt upon a diviner plan, and in a more heavenly form. If it retire into the shadow of death, and gloom of the grave; it is only to return from a short confinement, to endless liberty. If it dies, it is in

* The cowslip smiles in *brighter yellow drest*,
Than that which veils the nubil virgin's breast:
A *fairer red* stands blushing in the rose,
Than that which on the bridegroom's vestments flows.

PRIOR'S *Sol.*

order to rise more illustrious from its ruins; and wear an infinitely brighter face, of perfection, and of glory.*

HAVING now made my *panegyric;* let me next, take up a *lamentation,* for these loveliest productions of the vegetable world.—For, I forsee their approaching doom. Yet a little while, and all the sweets of the breathing, all the beauties of the blooming spring, are no more. Every one of these amiable forms, must be shriveled to deformity, and trodden to the earth.——Significant resemblance this, of all created beauty. *All flesh is grass;* like the green herbage, liable and prone to fade. Nay, *all the goodliness thereof,* its finest accomplishments and what the world universally admires, *is as the flower of the field;* which loses its gloss, decays and perishes, more speedily than the grass itself.—Behold then, ye brightest among the daughters of *Eve;* behold yourselves, in this glass. See the charms of your *person* eclipsed, by the lustre of these little flowers; and the frailty of your *state* represented,† by their transient

* The wise, the just, the pious, and the brave,
Live in their deaths, and flourish from the grave.
Grain hid in earth, repays the peasant's care;
And ev'ning suns but set to rise more fair

† When *snows* descend, and robe the fields
In *winter*'s bright array;
Touch'd by the sun, the lustre fades,
And weeps itself away.

When *spring* appears; when *violets* blow,
And shed a rich perfume;
How soon the fragrance breathes its last!
How short-liv'd is the bloom!

Fresh in the morn, the *summer rose*
Hangs wither'd ere 'tis noon;
We scarce enjoy the balmy gift,
But mourn the pleasure gone.

With gliding fire, an *ev'ning star*
Streaks the *autumnal* skies;
Shook from its seat, it darts away,
And, in an instant, dies.

Such are the *charms,* that flush the cheek,
And sparkle in the eye:
So, from the lovely finish'd form
The transient *graces* fly.

glories. A fever may scorch those polished veins; a consumption may emaciate the dimpling cheeks; and a load of unexpected sorrows, depress those lively spirits. Or should these disasters, in pity, spare the tender frame; yet age, inexorable age and wrinkles, will assuredly come at last; will whither all the fine features, and blast every sprightly grace.

THEN, ye *fair*, when those sparkling eyes are darkened, and sink in their orbs; when they are rolling in agonies, or swimming in death; how will you sustain the affliction? how will you repair the loss?—Apply your thoughts to *religion*. Attend to the *one thing needful* Believe in, and imitate, the blessed JESUS. Then shall your souls mount up to the realms of happiness; when the well-proportioned clay, is mingling with its mean original. The light of GOD's countenance will irradiate, with matchless and consummate perfection, all their exalted faculties, Cleansed entirely from every dreg of corruption, like some unsullied mirror, they will reflect the complete image of their Creator's holiness.—O! that you would thus *dress* your *minds*, and prepare for the immortal state! then, from shining among your fellow-creatures on earth; you shall be translated, to shine around the throne of GOD. Then, from being the sweetners of our life, and the delight of our eyes, here below; you shall pass, by an easy transition, into Angels of light; and become "an everlasting excellency, the joy "of all generations."

YES; *ye flowery nations, ye must all decay.*—Yonder *lily*, that looks like the Queen of the gay creation—See how gracefully it erects its majestic head! what an air of dignity and grandeur ennobles its aspect! for elevated mien, as well as for incomparable lustre, justly may it be preferred to the magnificent Monarch of the East*. But, all stately and charming as it is, it will hardly survive, a few more days. That unspotted whiteness, must quickly be tarnished; and the snowy form, defiled in the dust.

To this the *seasons*, as they roll,
Their atteſtation bring:
They warn the *fair*; their ev'ry round
Confirms the truth I ſing.

* Matt. vi. 29.

As the lily pleases, with the noble simplicity of its appearance; the *tulip* is admired, for the gaiety and multiplicity of of its colours. What a profusion of dyes, arrays its painted cup! its tinges are so glowing; its contrasts so strong; and the arrangement of them both, so elegant and artful!—'Twas lately the pride of the border, and the reigning beauty of the delightful season. As exquisitely fine as the rainbow, and almost as extremely transient; it spread, for a little moment, its glittering plumage: but has, now, laid all its distinguished honors down. Those radiant stripes are blended, alas! rudely blended with common mold.

To a graceful shape, and blooming complexion, the *rose* adds the most agreeable perfume. Our nostrils make it repeated visits, and are never weary of drinking in its sweets. A fragrance, so peculiarly rich and reviving, transpires from its opening tufts; that every one covets its acquaintance. How have I seen even the accomplished *Clarissa*, for whom so many votaries languish, fondly caressing this little flower! That lovely bosom, which is the seat of innocence and virtue; whose least excellency it is, to rival the delicacy of the purest snows; among a thousand charms of its own, thinks it possible to adopt another from the damask rose-bud.—Yet, even this universal favourite must fail. Its native balm, cannot preserve it from putrefaction. Soon, soon, must it resign all those endearing qualities; and hang neglected on its stem, or drop despised to the ground.

One could wish, methinks, these loveliest of the inanimate race, a longer existence: but in vain: they *fade*, almost as soon as they *flourish*; within less than a month, their glories are extinct. Let the sun take a few more journeys through the sky; then, visit this enchanting walk; and you will find nothing, but a wretched wilderness of ragged or naked stalks.—But O! (my soul exults in the thought) the *garment of* celestial *glory*, which shall erelong array the re-animated body, will never wax old. The illustrious *robes* of a saviour's consummate *righteousness*, which are appointed to deck the justified spirit, are incor-

ruptible and immortal. No moth, can *corrode* their *texture;* no number of ages, *sully* their *brightness.* The light of day may be quenched, and all the stars sink in obscurity; but, the honors of "just men made perfect," are subject to no diminution: inextinguishable and unfading, is the lustre of their crown.

YES; ye flowery nations, ye must all decay.—Winter, like some enraged and irresistible conqueror, that carries fire and sword, where-ever he advances; demolishes towns; depopulates countries; spreads slaughter and desolation, on every side—So, just so, will *winter*, with his savage and unrelenting *blasts*, invade this beautiful prospect. The storms, are gathering, and the tempests mustering their rage, to fall upon these vegetable kingdoms. They will ravage through the dominions of nature; and plunder her *riches*, and lay waste her *charms*—Then, ye trees, must ye stand stript of your verdant apparel; and, ye fields, be spoiled of your waving treasures. Then, the earth, disrobed of all her gay attire; must sit in sables, like a disconsolate widow: the sun too, that now rides in triumph round the world, and scatters gaiety from his radiant eye, will then look faintly from the windows of the south; and, casting a short glance on our dejected world, will leave us to the uncomfortable gloom of tedious nights.—Then, these pretty *choristers* of the *air*, will chant no more to the gentle gales. The lark, the linnet, and all the feathered songsters abandon their notes, and indulge their woes. Mute is every shrill and tuneful pipe; the harmony of the woods is at an end: and silence, (unless interrupted by howling winds) sullen silence, sits brooding upon the boughs; that are now made vocal, by a thousand warbling throats.

But, O! ravishing remembrance! the *songs* of *saints* in *light*, never admit a pause for sadness. All heaven, will resound with the melody of their gratitude; and all eternity, echo to their triumphant acclamations. The *hallelujahs* of that world; and the harmonious joy of its inhabitants; will be as lasting, as the divine perfections they celebrate.—Come then, holy love, and *tune* my *heart;* descend, celestial fire, and *touch* my *tongue;* that I may stand ready to strike up, and bear my part, in that great *hosanna*, that everlasting hymn.

YES; yes; ye flowery nations, ye must all decay.—And, indeed, could you add the *strength* of an oak, or the stability of a pyramid,* to all the *delicacy* of your texture; yet short, exceeding short, even then, would your duration be. For *I see, that all things come to an end.* The pillars of nature are tottering; the foundations of the round world, are falling away: "the heavens themselves, wax old like a "garment."—But, amidst these views of general ruin, here is our refuge; this our consolation; *we know, that our Redeemer liveth.* Thy years, blessed Jesus, shall not fail: from everlasting to everlasting, thou art still the same; the same most excellent and adorable being; the same omnipotent and faithful friend; the same all-sufficient and inestimable portion. O! may we but partake of thy merits; be sanctified by thy grace; and received into thy glory!—Then, perish, if ye will, all inferior delights. Let all that is *splendid* in the skies, expire; and all that is *amiable* in nature, be expunged. Let the whole extent of creation, be turned again into one undistinguishable void; one universal blank:—Yet, if God be ours, we shall have *enough:* if God be ours, we shall have *all,* and abound:† all that our circumstances can want, or our wishes crave, to make us unconceivably blessed and happy: blessed and happy, not only through this little interval of time, but through the unmeasurable revolutions of eternity.

* I know not any performance, in which the transitory nature, of these most durable monuments of human grandeur, is hinted with such a modest air of instruction, or their hideous ruin described, in such a pomp of pleasing horror; as in a small, but solemn, picturesque, and majestic poem, intitled—The Ruins of Rome. Written by the Rev. Mr Dyer; whom the reader (if he has the pleasure of perusing that beautiful piece) will easily perceive, to have drawn from the *originals* themselves; as nothing but the *sight* of those magnificent remains, could have inspired his lines with such vivacity.——As a specimen of the work, and a confirmation of the remark suggested above, I take leave to transcribe the following lines:

——— The pilgrim oft,
At dead of night, mid his oraison hears
Aghast the voice of time, disparting tow'rs,
Tumbling all precipitate down dash'd,
Rattling around, loud thund'ring to the moon.

† His hand the good man fastens on the skies,
And bids earth roll, nor feels the idle whirl.

Night Thoughts, No. 1.

THE *sun* is, now, come forth in his *strength;* and beats fiercely, upon my throbbing pulse——Let me retire to yonder inviting *arbour.* There, the woodbines retain the lucid drop; and the jessamines, that line the verdant alcove, are still impearled with dews.—Welcome, ye *refreshing shades!* I feel, I feel, your chearing influence. My languid spirits revive; the slackened sinews are new-strung; and life bounds brisker, through all her crimson channels.

RECLINED on this mossy couch; and surrounded by this fragrant coolness; let me renew my aspirations, to the ever-present Deity. Here, let me remember, and imitate, the pious *Augustine,* and his mother *Monica.* Who, being engaged in discourse, on the beauties of the visible creation; rose by these ladders, to the glories of the invisible state: till they were inspired with the most *affecting sense* of their super-eminent excellency; and actuated with the most *ardent breathings,* after their full enjoyment. Insomuch, that they were almost rapt up into the bliss, they contemplated; and scarce "knew, whether they were in "the body, or out of the body."

WHEN *tempests* toss the ocean: when plaintive signals of distress, are heard from the bellowing deep; and melancholy tokens of shipwreck, come floating on the foaming surge: then, how delightful to stand safe on shore, and hug one's self in conscious security!*—When a *glut* of *waters,* bursts from some mighty torrent; rushes headlong over all the neighbouring plains; sweeps away the helpless cattle; and drives the affrighted shepherd from his hut: then, from the top of a distant eminence, to descry the danger, we need not fear; how pleasing!—Such, methinks, is my *present situation;* for, now, the sun blazes from on high: the air glows with his fire: the fields are rent with chinks: the roads are scorched to dust: the woods seem to contract a sickly aspect, and a russet hue: the traveller, broiled as he rides, hastens to his inn, and intermits his

* As *Lucretius* gave the *hint* for these observations, so, he assigns the *reason* of the pleasure specified. It arises, not from the consideration of *another's misery;* this would indicate the rankest malevolence; but, from the agreeable contemplation of our *own* personal *safety;* which, while we view circumstances, that are pernicious to others, but harmless to ourselves, is not a little heightened by the contrast.

journey; the labourer, bathed in sweat, drops the scythe, and desists from his work: the cattle flee to some shady covert, or else pant and toss under the burning noon.—Even the stubborn rock, smit with the piercing beam, is ready to cleave. All things *languish*, beneath the *dazling deluge*—While I shall enjoy a *cool* hour, and *calm* reflection; amidst the gloom of this *bowery recess*, that scarce admits one speck of sunshine.

Thus, may both the flock, and their shepherd, *dwell beneath the defence of the Most High*, and *abide under the shadow of the Almighty* * Then, though † the *pestilence* walketh in darkness, and the *sickness* destroyeth at noonday; though thousands fall beside us, and ten thousand at our right hand; we need fear no evil. Either, the destroying angel shall pass over our houses; or else, he shall dispense the corrections of a friend, not the scourges of an enemy; which, instead of hurting us, shall work for our good—Then, though *profaneness* and *infidelity*, far more malignant evils, breathe deadly contagion, and taint the morals of multitudes around us; yet, if the great Father of Spirits "hide us in the hollow of his hand," we shall hold fast our integrity, and be faithful unto death.

Let then, dearest Lord, O! let thy servant, and the people committed to his care, be received into thy protection. Let us take sanctuary under that *tree of life*, erected in thy ignominious cross. Let us fly for safety to that *city of refuge*, opened in thy bleeding wounds. These shall be a sacred hiding-place, not to be pierced by the flames of divine wrath, or the fiery darts of temptation. Thy dying merits, and perfect obedience, shall be to our Souls, *as rivers of water in a dry*, or *as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.*‡

But most of all, in that *last tremendous day*, when the heavens are rent asunder, and wrapped up like a scroll: when thy Almighty arm shall arrest the sun in his career,

* Psalm xci. 1.

† This was written, when a very infectious and mortal distemper, raged in that neighbourhood

‡ Isai. xxxii. 2.

and dash to pieces the structure of the universe: when the dead, both small and great, shall be gathered before the throne of thy glory; and the fates of all mankind, hang on the very point of a final irreversible dicision:—then, blessed JESUS, let us be *owned* by thee, and we shall not be *ashamed*; *defended* by thee, and we shall not be *afraid*. O! may we, at that awful, that unutterably important juncture, be covered with the wings of thy redeeming love; and we shall behold all the horrible convulsions of expiring nature, with composure, wtth comfort! We shall even welcome the consummation of all things, as the *times of refreshing from the presence of the* LORD.*

THERE are, I perceive, who still attend the flowers; and, in defiance of the sun, ply their work on every expanded blossom. The *bees*, I mean, that nation of chymists! to whom nature has communicated the rare and valuable secret, of enriching themselves without impoverishing others. Who extract the most delicious syrup, from every fragrant herb; without wounding its substance, or diminishing its odours. I take the more notice of these *ingenious operators*; because, I would willingly make them my *pattern*.† While the gay *butterfly*, flutters her painted wings; and sips a little fantastic delight, only for the present moment. While the gloomy *spider*, worse than idly busied, is preparing his insidious nets for destruction; or sucking venom, even from the most wholesome plants. This frugal community, are wisely employed in providing for futurity; and collecting a copious stock, of the most balmy treasures.—And O! might these meditations sink into my soul! would the GOD, who suggested each heavenly *thought*; vouchsafe to convert it, into an *established principle*; to determine all my inclinations, and regulate my wholy conduct: I should, then, gather advantages

* Acts iii. 19.

† May I, like the matin bee,
Which we ev'ry morning see,
Exerting all its strongest pow'rs,
Gath'ring honey from the flow'rs'
Employ my time, improve my hours

Hos

from the same blooming objects; more precious than your golden stores, ye industrious artists. I also should go home laden with the *richest sweets*, and *noblest spoils*; though I crop not a leaf, nor call a single flower my own.

HERE I behold, assembled, in *one view*, almost all the *various beauties*, that have been severally entertaining my imagination. The *vistas*, struck through an antient wood, or formed by rows of venerable elms; conducting the spectator's observation, to some amiable object; or leading the traveller's footsteps, to this delightful seat:—the *walls*, enriched with fruit-trees, and faced with a covering of their leafy extensions; I should rather have said, hung with different pieces of nature's noblest tapestry:—the *walks*, neatly shorn, and lined with verdure; or finely smoothed, and coated with gravel:—the *alleys*, arched with shades, to embower our noon-tide repose; or thrown open for the free accession of air, to invite us to our evening recreation:—the decent *edgings* of box, that inclose, like a plain selvage, each beautiful compartment, and its splendid figures:—the shapely *evergreens*, and *flowering shrubs*; that strike the eye, and appear with peculiar dignity, in this distant situation:—the *bason*, with its crystal fount, floating in the centre; and diffusing an agreeable freshness, through the whole:—the waters, falling from a remote *cascade*; and gently murmuring, as they flow along the pebbles:—*these*, added to the *rest*; and all so disposed, that each recommends and endears each; render the *whole*, a most sweet ravishing scene, of order and variety, of elegance and magnificence.

FROM so many lovely prospects, clustering upon one's sight, it is impossible not to be reminded of *heaven*: that world of bliss; those regions of light; where the lamb that was slain manifests his beatific presence, and his saints live for evermore.—But O! what pencil can sketch out a draught, of that goodly land? What language express the incomparable splendors, of IMMANUEL's kingdom? Would some celestial hand draw aside the veil, but for one moment; and permit us to throw a single glace, on those divine abodes; how would all sublunary possessions, become tarnished in our eyes, and grow flat upon our taste! one transient glimpse of those unutterable beatitudes, would

captivate our souls, and engross all their faculties. *Eden* itself, after such a vision, would appear a chearless *desart;* and all earthly *charms*, intolerable *deformity.*

VERY *excellent things are spoken of thee, thou city of* GOD-* Volumes have been written, and those by inspired men, to display the wonders of thy perfections. All that is rich and resplendent in the visible creation, has been called in to aid our conceptions, and elevate our ideas. But indeed, no tongue can utter; no pen can describe; no fancy can imagine; what GOD, of his unbounded munificence, has prepared for them that love him.—Seeing then, that all terrestrial things must come to a speedy end, and there remaineth such a rest, such a blissful and everlasting rest, for the people of GOD; let me never be too fondly attached, to any present satisfactions. Weaned from whatever is temporal, may I maintain a superior indifference, for such transitory enjoyments; but long, long earnestly for the mansions that are above; the paradise, "which the LORD hath planted, and not man." Thither, may I transmit the *chief* of my *conversation;* and from thence, expect the *whole* of my *happiness.* Be that the sacred, powerful magnet, which ever influences my heart; ever attracts my affections. *There*, are such transcendent glories, as eye has not seen: *there*, are such transporting pleasures, as ear has not heard: *there*, is such a fulness of joys, as the thought of man cannot conceive.

INTO that consummate felicity; those eternal fruitions; permit me, madam, to wish you, in due time, an *abundant entrance:* and to assure you, that this wish is breathed, with the same sincerity and ardour, for my honored correspondent, as it is, MADAM, for

Your most obedient, &c.

J. HERVEY.

* Psalm lxxxvii. 2.

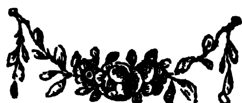
A

Descant

UPON CREATION.

With joy, with grief, that healing hand I see,
The skies it form'd, and yet it bled for me.

NIGHT THOUGHTS, No 4





A DESCANT UPON CREATION.

TO *know the love of* CHRIST; to have such a deep apprehension of his unspeakable kindness, as may produce in our hearts an adoring gratitude to his dying Majesty, and an unfeigned faith in his precious merits; this, according to St. *Paul's* estimate, is the highest and happiest attainment in the sacred science of christianity.* The following, is an attempt to assist the attentive mind, in learning a line or two of that best and greatest lesson. It introduces the most conspicuous parts of the visible system, as so many *prompters* to our dull affections; each suggesting a *hint*, adapted to the important occasion, and suited to its respective character.

CAN there be a more powerful incentive to this heavenly temper; than to consider the magnificent and delicate scenes of the universe, with a particular reference to CHRIST, as the Creator?—Every object, viewed in this light, will, I hope, administer incessant *recruits*, to the *languishing* lamp of *divine love*. Every production in nature, will strike a spark into the soul; and the whole creation concur, to raise that smoaking flax into a flame.

CAN any thing impart a stronger *joy* to the believer; or more effectually tend to confirm his *affiance*, in the crucified LAMB; than to behold the heavens declaring his glory, and the firmament shewing his handy-work? Surely, it must be matter of inexpressible consolation to the poor

* Eph. iii. 19.

sinner; to observe the honors of his redeemer, written with sun-beams, over all the face of the world.

LET those, therefore, who delight to read an account of their incarnate JEHOVAH; as he is revealed in the books of *Moses* and the prophets, the evangelists and apostles; endeavour, accustom themselves, to see a sketch of his perfections; as they stand delineated in that *stately* volume, where every *leaf*, is a spacious plain—every *line*, a flowing brook—every *period*, a lofty mountain.

SHOULD any of my readers be unexercised in such speculations, I beg leave (in pursuance of my promise) to present them with a *specimen:* to offer a clue, which may possibly lead their minds, into this most improving and delightful train of thinking.

SHOULD any be inclined to suspect the following observations, as the voice of rant, or the lawless flight of fancy, rather than acquiesce in them, as the *words of truth and soberness:* I intreat such persons to recollect, that they are warranted by the unanimous testimony of the inspired penmen. Who frequently celebrate IMMANUEL, or CHRIST JESUS, as the great Almighty cause of all; assuring us, that *all things were created by him, and for him; and that in him all things consist.**

ON such a subject, what is *wonderful*, is far from being *extravagant*. To be wonderful, is the grand characteristic of GOD, and his works; especially, of that most distinguished and glorious even of the divine works, REDEMPTION. So glorious, that "all the miracles in *Egypt*, and "the marvellous acts in the field of *Zoan;*" all that the *Jewish* annals have recorded; or the human ear has heard; dwindle into *trivial* events, and are scarce worthy to be *remembered*,† in comparison of this stupendous transaction. —Kindled, therefore, into pleasing astonishment, by such a survey; let me give full scope to my meditations, and pour out my whole soul on so boundless a subject; regardless of the limits, which cold criticism might prescribe.

O YE *angels*, that surround the throne; ye princes of heaven, "that excel in strength," and are cloathed with

* Colos. i. 16, 17. † Isai. xliii. 18.

transcendent brightness; he, who placed you in those stations of exalted honor, who dignified your nature with such illustrious endowments; he, whom you all obey, and all adore:—HE took not on him the angelic form, but united himself to frail flesh and blood; communicated with us wretched mortals in our weariness, our pains, and all our infirmities, sin only excepted:——That we might, one day, be raised to your sublime abodes; be adopted into your blissful society; and join with your transported choir, in giving glory to HIM that sitteth upon the throne, and to the LAMB for ever and ever.*

O YE *heavens;* whose azure arches rise so immensely high, and stretch so unmeasurably wide: stupendous amphitheatre; amidst whose vast expansive circuit, orbs of enormous magnitude are perpetually running their amazing races: unfathomably depths of æther; where worlds unnumbered float, and, to our limited sight, worlds unnumbered are lost:—He, who adjusted your dimensions with his span, and formed the magnificent structure with his word; HE was once wrapt in swadling-cloths, and laid in a manger:——that the benefits accruing to his people, through his most meritorious humiliation, might have no other measure of their value than immensity; might run parallel, in their duration, with eternity.

O YE *stars;* that beam with such inextinguishable brilliancy, through the midnight sky; oceans of flame, and centres of worlds, though seemingly little points of light: ——He, who shone, with essential effulgence, innumerable ages, before your twinkling tapers were kindled; and will shine, with everlasting majesty and beauty, when your places shall be known no more: HE was involved, for many years, in the deepest obscurity; lay concealed, in the contemptible city *Nazareth;* lay disguised, under the man habit of a carpenter's son:——that he might plant the heavens,† as it were, with new constellations; and exalt the clods of earth to a radiancy, superior to yours: a radiancy, which shall adorn the very heaven of heavens,

* Rev. v. 13

† Isai li. 16.

when you shall vanish away like smoke,* or expire as momentary sparks from the smitten steel.

Comets; that sometimes shoot into the illimitable tracts of æther, farther than the discernment of our eye is able to follow; sometimes, revisit the planetery system, and sweep our affrighted hemisphere with your enormous fiery train; that, sometimes make near approaches to the sun, and burn almost in his immediate beams; sometimes, retire to very remote distances, and freeze, for ages, in the excessive rigours of winter:—He, who at his sovereign pleasure, withdraws the blazing wonder: or leads forth the portentous stranger, to shake terror over guilty kingdoms: HE was overwhelmed with the most shocking amazement, and plunged into the deepest anxiety; was chilled with apprehensions of fear, and scorched by the flames of avenging wrath:——That I, and other rebellious creatures, might not be for ever agitated, in the extremes of jarring passions; opposite, yet on either side, tormenting far more tormenting to the soul, than the severest degrees of your heat and cold to the human sense.

Ye *planets;* that, winged with unimaginable speed, traverse the regions of the sky; sometimes climbing millions and millions of miles above, sometimes descending as far below, the great axle of your motions: ye, that are so minutely faithful, to the vicissitudes of day and night; so exactly punctual, in bringing on the changes of your respective seasons:—He, who launched you, at first, from his mighty arm; who continually impels you, with such wonderful rapidity; and guides you, with such perfect regularity: who fixes "the habitation of his holiness and his glory," infinite heights above your scanty rounds: HE once became a helpless infant; sojourned in our inferior world; fled from the persecutor's sword: and wandered as a vagabond in a foreign land:—that he might lead our feet into the way of peace; that he might bring us aliens near to God, bring us exiles home to heaven.

* Alluding to a passage in *Isaiah*, which is, I think, grand and elevated beyond all comparison ——"Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die *like the feeble insect;* but my righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation shall not be abolished.' —*Isa.* li. 6.

THOU *sun;* inexhausted source of light, and heat, and comfort; without whose presence an universal gloom would ensue, and horror insupportable: who, without the assistance of any other fire, sheddest day through a thousand realms; and, not confining thy munificence to realms only, extende t thy enlightening influences to surrounding worlds: prime chearer of the animal, and great enlivener of the vegetable tribes; so beautiful in thyself, so beneficial in thy effects, that erring heathens addressed thee with adorations, and mistook thee for thy Maker:—He, who filled thy orb with a profusion of lustre; lustre, in its direct emanations, unsufferably bright; but, rebated by reflexion, delightfully mild: He, beiore whom thy meridian splendors are but a shade; whose love transfused into the heart, is infinitely more exhilarating, than even thy sweet and clear shining after the rain:—HE divested himself of his all-transcending distinctions, and drew a veil over the effulgence of his divinity; that, by speaking to us, face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend, he might dispel our intellectual darkness: his "visage was marred," and he became the scorn of men, the outcast of the people; that, by this manifestation of his unutterably tender regard for our welfare, he might diffuse many a gleam of joy through our dejected minds: that, in another state of things, he might cloathe even our fallen nature, with the honors of that magnificent luminary; and give all the righteous to shine forth, as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.

THOU *moon;* that walkest among the host of stars, and, in thy lucid appearance, art superior to them all: fair ruler of the night; sometimes, supplying the day, with thy waxing brightness; sometimes, waning into dimness, and scarcely scattering the nocturnal gloom; sometimes, covered with sack-cloth, and alarming the gazing nations:—He, who dresses thy opake globe, in beaming, but borrowed silver; whose dignity is unchangeable, underived, and all his own: He vouchsafed to wear a body of clay; He vouchsafed to appear as in a bloody eclipse, shorn of his resplendent beams, and surrounded with a night of horror, that knew not one reviving ray:——Thus, has he im-

powered his church, to tread the moon under her feet;* and, inspired with the hope of brighter glory, of more enduring bliss, to triumph over all the vain anxieties, and vainer amusements, of this sublunary, precarious, mutable world.

Ye *thunders;* that, awfully grumbling in the distant clouds, seem to meditate indignation, and form the first essays of a far more dreadful peal; or, suddenly bursting over our heads, rend the vault above, and shake the ground below, with the hideous, horrid crack: ye, that send your tremendous vollies from pole to pole, startling the savage herds,† and astonishing the human race: HE, who permits terror to sound her trumpet, in your deep, prolonged, enlarging, aggravated roar: HE uttered a feeble infantile cry in the stable, and strong expiring groans on the accursed tree:—that he might, in the gentlest accents, whisper peace to our souls; and, at length, tune our voices to the melody of heaven.

O ye *lightnings;* that brood, and lie couchant, in the sulpherous vapours: that glance, with forked fury, from the angry gloom, swifter and fiercer, than the lion rushing from his den; or, open into vast expansive sheets of flame, sublimely waved over the prostrate world, and fearfully lingering in the frighted skies: ye, that formerly laid in ashes the licentious abodes of lust and violence; that will, ere long, set on fire the elements, and co-operate in the conflagration of the globe:—He, who kindles your flash, and directs you when to sally, and where to strike; commissions your whirling bolts, whom to kill, and whom to spare: HE resigned his sacred person, to the most barbarous and provoking insults; submitted his beneficent hands, to the ponderous hammer, and the piercing nail; yea, with-held not his heart, his very heart, from the stab of the executioner's spear: and, instead of flashing confusion on his outrageous tormentors; instead of striking them dead to the earth, or plunging them to the depths of hell, with his frown; he cried—in his last moments, and with

* Rev. xii. 1.

† Psalm xxx 9

agonizing lips, he cried, FATHER, FORGIVE THEM; FOR THEY KNOW NOT, WHAT THEY DO!—O! what a pattern of patience for his saints! What an object of admiration for angels! What a constellation of every mild, amiable, and benign virtue; shining, in this hour of darkness, with ineffable splendor and beauty!*——Hence, hence it is, that we are not trembling under the lightnings of Mount *Sinai;* that we are not blasted by the flames of divine vengeance, or doomed to dwell with everlasting burnings.

YE frowning *wintry clouds*, oceans pendent in the air, and burthening the winds; he, in whose hand, you are an overflowing scourge; or, by whose appointment, an arsenal † of warlike stores: he, who opens your sluices, and a flood gushes forth, to destroy the fruits of the earth, and drown the husbandman's hopes: who moulds you into frozen balls, and you are shot, linked with death,‡ on the troops of his enemies: HE, instead of discharging the fu-

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* One can hardly forbear taking notice of the *[illegible]* temper and *perverse* conduct of those who attempt to turn this most distinguishing and ornamental part of our LORD's life into ridicule and reproach.—Having spoken of CHRIST, as despitefully used, and arrayed in a purple robe, crowned with thorns, and holding, by way of mock majesty, a reed instead of a sceptre; for he enters into all these circumstances, which is very remarkable.—Why, in the name of wonder, does he not, on this occasion, [illegible], act the GOD? Why does he not deliver himself from this shocking ignominy, or execute some signal vengeance, on the authors of such injurious and abusive insults, both on Himself and his Father?—Why? because HE was meekness and gentleness itself; whereas [illegible] deities were slaves to their turbulent and resentful passions. Because [illegible] were little better than savages in human shape, who too often made a merit of slaughter, and prided themselves in spilling blood: but, CHRIST was the Prince of Peace, and came not to destroy men's lives, but to save. Because, any madman on earth, or [illegible] hell, is capable of venting his rage; but who, amidst such unsufferable provocations and barbarities, who, having in his own hand, the power to rescue himself, the power to [illegible] himself, could submit to all, with an unruffled serenity of patience, and not only not be exasperated, but *overcome* in so triumphant a manner, *evil with good?* None but CHRIST! none but CHRIST! this was compassion worthy of a GOD, clemency and humility *[illegible]*.

† *Juvenal* seems to consider the clouds, under this same character, in that beautiful line,—

The clouds contain God's implements of war,
When wroth he hurls his thunders from afar.

SATYR 13.

‡ It is well known, what terrible slaughter has been made, by these missive weapons of the Almighty. *Josh.* x. 11. But, the most dreadful description of this *[illegible]* of the heavens is in *Rev.* xvi. 21. "There fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent."

riousness of his wrath upon this guilty head; poured out his prayers; poured out his sighs; poured out his very soul; for me and my fellow-transgressors:—that, by virtue of his inestimable propitiation, the overflowings of divine good-will might be extended to sinful men; that the skies might pour down righteousness; and peace on her downy wings, peace with her balmy blessings, descend to dwell on earth.

Ye *vernal clouds;* furls of finer air, folds of softer moisture; he, who draws you, in copious exhalations, from the briny deep; bids you leave every distasteful quality behind; and become floating fountains of sweetest waters: he, who dissolves you into gentle rain, and dismisses you in fruitful showers; who kindly commissions you, to drop down fatness, as you fall, and to scatter flowers over the field:——HE, in the unutterable bitterness of his spirit, was without any comforting sense of his Almighty Father's presence, had not one drop of that sacred consolation, which on many of his afflicted servants, has been distilled as the evening dews, and has "given songs in the night" of distress:—That, from this unallayed and inconsolable anguish of our all-gracious master, we, as from a well of salvation, might derive large draughts of spiritual refreshment.

Thou grand *ethereal bow;* whose beauties flush the firmament, and charm every spectator: he, who paints thee on the fluid skirts of the sky; who decks thee with all the pride of colours; and bends thee into that graceful and majestic figure: at whose command, thy vivid streaks sweetly rise, or swiftly fade:——HE, through all his life, was arrayed in the humble garb of poverty; and, at his exit wore the gorgeous garment of contempt: insomuch, that even his own familiar friends, ashamed, or afraid to own him, "hid as it were their faces from him:*—To teach us a becoming disdain, for the unsubstantial and transitory glitter of all worldly vanities: to introduce us, in robes brighter than the tinges of thy resplendent arch; even in the robes of his own most immaculate righteousness, to introduce us,

* *Isa.* liii. 3. *He was as one* flagitious and *abhorred wretch, from whom every one,* disdaining such a character, and disclaiming such an acquaintance, studiously *hid* [illegible] *face.*

unblameable and unconfounded, before that awful throne, which the peaceful rainbow surrounds; surrounds, as a pledge of everlasting fidelity, and infinite mercy.

Ye *storms* and *tempests*, that vex the continent, and toss the seas; that dash navies on the rocks, and drive forests from their roots! he, who holds the rapid and raging hurricane, in straitened reins; and walks, dreadfully serene, on the very wings of the wind: he, whose breath rouses you into such resistless fury, and whose nod controuls you in your wildest career:—HE went, all meek and gentle, like a lamb to the slaughter for us; and, as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth:—Thus, are we instructed to bear, with decent magnamity, the various assaults of adversity; and to pass, with a becoming tranquillity of temper, through the ruder blasts of injurious treatment; thus are we delivered from the fiercer storms of inexorable justice; from the "fire, the brimstone, and the "horrible tempest, which shall be the portion of the un- "godly."

Thou *pestilence*, that scatterest ten thousand poisons from thy baleful wings; tainting the air, and infecting the nations: that leavest mighty regions depopulated, and crouded cities, even great and fair, without inhabitant:— He, who arms thee with inevitable destruction, and ordains thee to march before * his angry countenance; to spread desolation among the tents of the wicked, and be the forerunner of far more fearful indignation: HE, in his holy humanity, was arraigned as a criminal; and, though innocence itself, yea, the very Pattern of Perfection, was condemned to die, like the most execrable miscreant: as a nuisance to society, and the very bane of the public happiness, he was hurried away to execution, and hammered to the gibbet:—That, by his blood, he might prepare a sovereign medicine, to cure us of a more fatal distemper, than the pestilence that walketh in darkness, or the sickness that destroyeth at noon-day: that he might himself

* Before him went the pestilence. *Hab.* iii. 5

say to our last enemy, "O death, I will be thy plague; "O grave, I will be thy destruction."*

Heat, whose burning influence parches the *Libyan* wilds; tans, into soot, the *Æthiopian's* complexion; and makes every species of life pant, languish, and sicken: *Cold*, whose icy breath glazes yearly the *Russian* seas; often glues the frozen sailor to the Cordage; and stiffens the traveller into a statue of rigid flesh:—HE, who sometimes mingles you both, and produces a delightful temperature; sometimes, suffers you to act separately, and rage with intolerable severity: that King of heaven, and Controuler of universal nature, when dwelling in a tabernacle of clay, was exposed to chilling damps, and smitten by sultry beams: the stars, in their midnight watches, heard him pray; and the sun, in his meridian fervours, saw him toil:—Hence are our frozen hearts dissolved, into a flow of divine love: conscious of a deliverance from those insufferable flames, which glow in the infernal prison.

Thou *ocean*, vast world of waters; he who sunk that capacious bed for thy reception, and poured the liquid element into unfathomable chanels; before whom, all the foaming billows, and floating mountains, are as the small drop of a bucket: who, by the least intimation of his will, swells thy fluid kingdoms, in wild commotion, to mingle with the clouds, or reduces them, in calm composure, to slumber on the shores; he, who, once, gave thee a warrant to overwhelm the whole earth, and bury all its degenerate inhabitants in a watery grave; but has, now, laid an everlasting embargo on thy boisterous waves; and bound thee, all fierce and madding as thou art, in chains stronger than adamant, yet formed of despicable sand:—All the waves and billows of inexorable vengeance, passed over HIS tormented body, and afflicted soul: that we might emerge from those depths of misery, from that abyss of guilt, into which we are plunged by *Adam's* fall, and more irretrievably sunk by our own transgressions: that, at the last, we might be restored to that happy world, which

Hos. xiii.

is represented, in the vision of God, as having "no sea;"* to denote its perpetual stability, and undisturbed serenity.

Ye *mountains*, that overlook the clouds, and project a shade into distant provinces; everlasting pyramids of nature, not to be shook by conflicting elements; not to be torn by the convulsions of earthquakes; nor impaired even by the ravages of time:——He, who bid your ridges rise so high, and your foundations stand so fast: in whose scale, you are lighter than dust; in whose eye, you are less than nothing:—HE sunk, beneath a load of woes; woes insupportable, but not his own; when he took our iniquities, and heaved the more than mountainous burthen from a guilty world.

Ye verdant *woods*, that crown our hills, and are crowned yourselves with leafy honors: ye humble *shrubs*, adorned, in spring, with opening blossoms; and fanned, in summer, by gentle gales: ye, that in distant climes, or in cultivated gardens, breathe out spicy odours, and embalm the air with delightful perfumes:—Your all-glorious and ever-blessed Creator's head, was incircled with the thorny wreathe, and his body bathed in a bloody sweat:—that we might wear the crown, which fadeth not away; and live, for evermore, surrounded with delights, as much surpassing yours, as yours exceed the rugged desolations of winter.

Thou mantling *vine*; he, who hangs, on thy slender shoots, the rich, transparent, weighty clustre; who, under thy unornamented foliage, and amidst the pores of thy otherwise worthless bough, prepares the liquor—the refined and exalted liquor, that cheers the nations, and fills the cup of joy:—*Trees*, whose branches are elevated and waving in air; or diffused, in easy confinement, along a sunny wall: he, who loads you with a lovely burthen of delicious fruits; whose genial warmth beautifies their rind, and mellows their taste:—HE, when voluntarily subject to our wants, instead of being refreshed with your generous juices, or regaled with your luscious pulp; had a loathsome potion of vinegar, mingled with gall, addressed to his lips: —that we might eat of the fruit of the tree of life, which

* Rev. xxi. 1

grows in the midst of the paradise of God;* and drink new wine with him, in his Father's kingdom.

Ye luxuriant *meadows;* he, who, without the seedman's industry, replenishes your irriguous lap, with never-failing crops of herbagé; who enamels their chearful green, with flowers of every hue:——Ye fertile *fields;* he, who blesses the labours of the husbandman; who enriches your well-tilled plains with waving harvests, and calls forth the staff of life from your furrows: he, who causes both meadows and fields to laugh and sing, for the abundance of plenty: —He was no stranger to corroding hunger, and parching thirst; he eat the bitter bread of woe, and had "plente-" ousness of tears to drink:"—that we might partake of richer dainties, than those which are produced by the dew of heaven, and proceed from the fatness of the earth; that we might feed on "the hidden manna," and eat the bread which giveth life, eternal life, unto the world.

Ye *mines*, rich in golden ore, or bright with veins of silver; that distribute your shining treasures, as far as winds can waft the vessel of commerce; who bestow your alms on monarchs, and have princes for your pensioners:—Ye beds of *gems*, toy-shops of jealous nature, which form, in dark retirement, the glittering stone; *diamonds*, that sparkle with a brilliant water; *rubies*, that glow with a crimson flame; *emeralds*, dipped in the freshest verdure of spring; *sapphires*, decked with the fairest drapery of the sky; *topaz*, emblazed with dazzling yellow; *amethyst*, impurpled with the blushes of the morning:——He, who tinctures the metallic dust, and consolidates the lucid drop; HE, when sojourning on earth, had no riches, but the riches of disinterested benevolence; had no ornament, but the ornament of unspotted purity: poor he was in his circumstances, and mean in all his accommodations; that WE might be rich in grace, and "obtain salvation with eternal glóry:" that we might for ever inherit the new *Jerusalem*, that splendid city, whose streets are paved with pure gold, and the walls garnished with all manner of precious stones.†

* Rev. ii. 7 † Rev. xx.

Ye gushing *fountains*, that trickle potable silver through the matted grass: ye fine transparent *streams*, that glide, in crystal waves, along your fringed banks: ye deep and stately *rivers*, that wind and wander in your course, to spread your favours wider; that gladden kingdoms in your progress, and augment the sea with your tribute:—He, who supplies all your currents, from his own ever-flowing and inexhaustible liberality; HE, when his nerves were racked with exquisite pain, and his blood inflamed by a raging fever, cried, I THIRST; and (O! unparalleled hardship!) was denied, in his great extremity, the poor refreshment of a single drop of water:—That we, having all sufficiency in all things, might abound to every good. Work here; and, hereafter, might be filled with all the fulness of GOD, and "drink of his pleasures, as out of a river."

Ye *birds*, chearful tenants of the bough, gaily dressed in glossy plumage; who wake the morn, and solace the groves, with your artless lays: surprizing architects, who, without rule or line, build your pensile structures with inimitable niceness: you have each his commodious nest, roofed with shades, and lined with warmth, to protect and cherish the callow brood:—But He, who tuned your throats to harmony, and taught you that curious skill; HE was "a man acquainted with grief," and had not where to lay his head; had not where to lay his head, till he felt the pangs of dissolution, and was laid in the silent grave:—That we, dwelling under the wings of omnipotence, and resting in the bosom of infinite love, might spend an harmonious eternity in "singing the song of *Moses*, and of the LAMB."

Bees, industrious workmen; that sweep, with busy wing, the flowery garden; and search the blooming heath; and sip the mellifluous dews: strangers to idleness, that ply, with incessant assiduity, your pleasing task; and suffer no opening blossom to pass unexplored, no sunny gleam to slip away unimproved: most ingenious artificers, that cling to the fragrant buds, and, with your nice inserted tubes, probe them to the very bottom; drain them of their treasured sweets; and extract even the odoriferous souls of herbs, and plants, and flowers:—You, when you have completed your work; collected, refined, and securely

lodged the ambrosial stores; and might reasonably expect the peaceful fruition of your acquisitions; you, alas! are barbarously destroyed, and leave your hoarded delicacies to others: leave them to be enjoyed by your very murderers. I cannot but pity your hard destiny!—How, then, should my bowels melt with sympathy, and eyes flow with tears;* when I remember, that *thus*, *thus* it fared with your and our incarnate Maker!† After a life of the most exemplary and useful piety: a life, filled with offices of beneficence, and labours of love: HE was, by wicked hands, crucified and slain: he left the honey of his toil, the balm of his blood, and the riches of his obedience, to be shared among others: to be shared even among those, who too often crucify him afresh, and put him to open shame.

Shall I mention the animal, that *spins* her soft, her shining, her exquisitely fine *silken* thread? whose matchless manufactures lend an ornament to grandeur, and make royalty itself more magnificent.—Shall I take notice of the cell, in which, when the gaiety and business of life are over, the little recluse immures herself, and spends the remainder of her days in retirement?—Shall I rather observe the sepulchre, which, when cloyed with pleasure, and weary of the world, she prepares for her own interment: or how, when a stated period is elapsed, she awakes from a death-like inactivity; breaks the inclosure of her tomb; throws off the dusky shroud; assumes a new form; puts on a more sumptuous array; and, from an insect creeping on the ground, becomes a winged inhabitant of the air?—No: this is a poor *reptile*; and therefore unworthy to serve as an illustration, when any character of the Son of God

* Can'st thou, ungrateful man, his torments see,
Nor *drop a tear* for HIM, who *pour'd* his *blood* for thee

Pitt's Poems, Octavo

† No one, I hope, will be offended at my introducing, on such an occasion, creatures of so low a rank. Since even the volumes of inspiration seem to lend me the sanction of their sacred authority. As they disdain not to compare the blessed Jesus to a *worm*, a [illegible], &c. And, perhaps, all comparisons which respect a Being of *infinite* dignity, are not only *mean*, but equally [illegible] and unworthy

I am sensible, likewise, that in this paragraph, and some others, all the circumstances are not completely correspondent. But if, in some grand particulars, the [illegible] answers to the description, this, I trust, will be sufficient for my purpose, and satisfactory to my readers

comes under consideration. But—let me correct myself. Was not CHRIST (to use the language of his own blessed spirit) "a *worm*, and no man?"* Did he not also bequeath the fine linen of his own most perfect righteousness, to compose the marriage-garment † for our naked souls? Did he not, before his flesh saw corruption, emerge triumphant from the grave; and mount not the lower firmament only, but ascend the highest heavens; taking possession of those immortal mansions, in our name, and as our forerunner?

YE *cattle*, that rest in your inclosed pastures; ye *beasts*, that range the ample forest; ye *fish*, that rove through trackless paths of the sea: *sheep* clad in garments, which, when left by you, are wore by kings; *kine*, who feed on verdure, which transmuted in your bodies, and strained from your udders, furnishes a repast for queens; *lions*, roaring after your prey, and *Leviathan* taking your pastime in the great deep: with all that climb the hills, or creep the vales; all that wing the firmament, or tread the soil, or swim the wave:—He, who spreads his ever-hospitable board; who admits you all to be his continual guests; and suffers you to want no manner of thing that is good:—HE was destitute, afflicted, tormented; endured all that was miserable and reproachful; in order to exalt the sojourners in clay, to seats of most distinguished honor; in order to introduce the slaves of sin, and heirs of hell, into consummate and everlasting bliss.

SURELY, the contemplation of such a subject, and the distant anticipation of such a hope, may almost turn earth into heaven, and make even inanimate nature vocal in praise. Let it then break forth from every creature. Let the *meanest* feel the inspiring impulse; let the *greatest* ac-

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* Psal. xxii. 6.

† This, and several other hints, interspersed in the two volumes, refer to the *active* and *passive* righteousness of CHRIST, *imputed* to believers, for their justification. Which, in the opinion of many great expositors, is the mystical and the most sublime meaning of the *wedding-garment*, so emphatically and forcibly recommended by the Teacher sent from [illegible] *Matt.* xxii. 11.

knowledge themselves unable, worthily to express the stupendous goodness.

PRAISE HIM, ye *insects* that crawl on the ground; who, though high above all height, humbled himself to dwell in dust.

Bleat out, ye vallies; let broader *lows* be responsive from the hills; ye *forests* catch, and ye *rocks* retain, the inarticulate hymn; for the great and good Shepherd, disdained not to be born in the stable, and, with frequent step, to retire into the desert.

Birds of the air, waft on your wings and warble in your notes, HIS praise; who though LORD of the celestial abodes, while sojourning on earth, wanted a shelter so commodious as your nests.

YE *rougher* world of *brutes*, join with these gentle songsters of the shade, and howl to HIM your hoarse applause; who breaks the jaw-bones of the infernal lion; who softens into mildness the savage disposition, and bids the wolf lie down, in amicable agreement, with the lamb.—Wave, ye stately *cedars*, in sign of worship, wave your branching heads to HIM; who meekly bowed his own, on the accursed tree.—Breathe balmy incense, ye blooming *flowers*, to the incarnate mystery, who, though his name be Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, and the Prince of Peace; yet vouchsafes to be called the Rose of Sharon, the Lily of the Vallies.—*Pleasing prospects*, scenes of beauty, where nicest art conspires with lavish nature, to form a paradise below; lay forth all your charms, and in all your charms confess yourselves a mere blank; compared with HIS amiableness, who is "the fairest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely."

DROP down, ye gentle *showers*, and testify, as you fall: O, testify of HIS grace, which descends more copiously than the rain, distils more sweetly than the dew.—Let sighing *gales* breathe, and murmuring *rivulets* flow; flow, in harmonious consonance, to HIM; whose spirit is far more reviving than the cooling breeze; who is himself the fountain of living waters.—Ye *lightnings*, blaze to HIS honor; ye *thunders*, sound HIS praise; while reverberating *clouds* return the roar, and bellowing *oceans* propagate the tremendous anthem:—Ye [illegible] creatures, in silent oratory

display the triumphs of HIS meekness; who, amidst the most provoking insults, was "dumb, and opened not his mouth."

GREAT *source* of *day*, address thy radiant homage to a far sublimer sun; write, in all thy ample round, with every lucid beam, O write HIS praise; whose word, accompanied with his spirit, sheds brighter light, and more exhilarating rays, through the mind.

SHINE clear, ye *skies*; look gay, thou *earth*; let *every* creature smile, for by the appearance of the Sun of Righteousness, peace is made with heaven, and joy come down to dwell on earth.—*Angels* and *arch-angels*, O let your songs be JESUS, and teach the heaven of heavens to resound his adored name: ye beheld him, with greater transports of admiration, when you attended his agony in the garden, and saw him prostrate on the ground; than when you beheld universal nature rising at his call, and saw the wonders of creating might: tune, tune to loftiest notes your golden harps, and waken raptures unknown before even in heavenly breasts: while *all* that has breath, swells the sacred concert, and bursts into a boundless peal of melody.

CHIEFLY, let *man* exalt his voice; let man, with distinguished Hosannas, hail the REDEEMER. For man, he was crucified on the racking cross; for man, he was consigned to the gloomy sepulchre.——However *different*, therefore, you are, or more different in your circumstances, be *unanimous* in magnifying a Saviour, who is no respecter of persons, who gave himself a ransom for all.——Bend, ye *kings*, from your thrones of ivory and gold; in your robes of imperial purple, fall prostrate at HIS feet; who forsook a nobler throne, and laid aside more illustrious ensigns of majesty; that you might reign with GOD for ever and ever.——*Children of poverty*, meanest of mortals (if any can be called poor, who are *thus* enriched; if any can be accounted mean, who are *thus* ennobled;) rejoice, greatly rejoice in GOD your Saviour; who chose to be indigent, chose to be contemned; that you might be intitled to the treasures, and be numbered with the princes, of heaven.——*Sons* of *affliction*, though harassed with pain, and inured to anguish,

O change your groans into songs of gratitude; let no complaining voice, no jarring string be heard. in the universal symphony; but *glorify* the LAMB even *in the fires;* who himself bore greater torment, than you feel, and has promised you a share in the joy, he inherits; who has made your sufferings short, and will make your rest eternal.——*Men* of *hoary* locks, bending beneath a weight of years, and tottering on the brink of the grave; let Christ be your support, under all infirmities; lean upon Christ, as the rock of your salvation; let his name, his precious name, form the last accents, that quiver on your pale expiring lips:—and let this be the first, that lisps on your tongues, ye tender *infants:* remember your Redeemer in your earliest moments: devote the choice of your hours to the learning of his will, and the chief of your strength to the glorifying of HIS name; who, in the perfection of health, and the very prime of manhood, was content to become a motionless and ghastly corpse; that you might be girt with the vigour, and cloathed with the bloom of immortal youth.

YE *spirits* of *just* men made *perfect*, who are released from the burthen of the flesh, and freed from all the vexatious solicitations, of corruption in yourselves; delivered from all the dreadful effects, of iniquity in others: who sojourn no longer in the tents of strife, or the territories of disorder; but are received into that pure, harmonious, holy society, where no ungenerous action creates outward irregularity, no suspicious jealousies breed inward disaffection; where every one acts up to his amiable and exalted character; where GOD himself is pleased *graciously* and *immediately* to preside.—You find, not without pleasing astonishment, your hopes improved into actual enjoyment, and your faith delightfully superseded by the beatific vision: you feel all your former shyness of behaviour, happily lost in the overflowings of unbounded love; and all your little differences of opinion, entirely overwhelmed in the tides of invariable truth: bless, therefore, with all your enlarged powers, bless *his* infinitely larger goodness; who, when he had overcome the sharpness of death, opened the gates of paradise, opened the kingdom of heaven, to all generations, and to every denomination, of the faithful.

Ye men of *holy* conversation, and *humble* tempers, think of HIM, who *loved you and washed you from your sins in his own blood:* O think of him, on your silent couch; talk of him, in every social interview: glory in his excellencies; make your boast of his obedience; and add, still continue to add, the music of a dutiful life, to all the oblations of a grateful tongue.

Weakest of believers, who go mourning under a sense of guilt, and conflicting with the ceaseless assaults of temptation; O put off your sack-cloth, and be girded with gladness. Because, Jesus, is as merciful to hear, as he is mighty to help. Because, he knows your integrity, amidst all your failings; he is touched with the tenderest sympathizing concern, for all your distresses; and he lives, ever lives, to be your *advocate* with the FATHER.——Why then should uneasy doubts sadden your countenances? why should desponding fears oppress your souls? turn, turn those disconsolate sighs into chearful hymns; since you have his *powerful intercession,* his *inestimable merits,* to be your anchor in all tribulations, to be your passport into eternal blessedness.—Above all, O ye *ministers* of the *sanctuary* heralds commissioned from above, lift every one his voice like a trumpet, and loudly proclaim the Redeemer. Get ye up, ye ambassadors of peace, get ye up into the high mountains; and spread far and wide the honors of the LAMB, "that was slain, but is alive for evermore." Teach every sacred roof to resound with his fame, and every human heart to glow with his love. Declare, as far as the force of words will go, O declare the inconceivable richness of that atoning blood, whose merits are commensurate with the glories of the Divinity. Tell the sinful wretch, what pity yearns in Immanuel's bowels, and *what* the compassionate high-priest has done for his soul. Invite the indigent, to become rich; intreat the guilty, to accept of pardon, because, in the crucified Jesus is fulness of grace, and all-sufficiency to save.—While you, placed in conspicuous stations, pour the joyful sound; may I, as I steal through the vale of humble life, catch the pleasing accents! For *me*, the author of all blessings became a curse: for *me*, his bones were dislocated, and his flesh was torn: he hung

with streaming veins, and an agonizing soul, on the cross, for *me*. O, may I, in the little sphere, and amidst the scanty circle of my acquaintance, at least whisper these glad transporting tidings; whisper them from my own heart, that they may surely reach, and sweetly penetrate theirs.

But, when men and angels raise the grand hymn; when all worlds, and all beings, add their *collective* acclamations, and unite in harmonious gratitude;——this full, fervent, and universal chorus, will be so *inferior* to the riches of the REDEEMER's grace; so *disproportionate* to the magnificence of his glory; that it will seem but to *debase* the unutterable theme, it attempts to exalt: the loud hallelujah will *die away*, in the solemn mental eloquence of prostrate, rapturous, *silent* adoration.

Oh goodness infinite! goodness immense!
And *love that passeth knowledge!*—Words are vain,
Language is lost in wonders so divine:
Come then, expressive SILENCE, muse his praise.



Contemplations

ON THE NIGHT.

Night is fair virtue's immemorial friend,
The conscious moon, through every distant age,
Has held a lamp to wisdom

NIGHT THOUGHTS, No V



CONTEMPLATIONS ON THE NIGHT.

THE business of the day dispatched, and the sultry heats abated, invited me to the recreation of a walk. A walk, in one of the *finest recesses* of the country; and in one of the most *pleasant evenings*, which the summer season produced.

THE limes and elms, uniting their branches over my head, formed a *verdant canopy*, and cast a most refreshing shade. Under my feet lay a *carpet* of nature's *velvet*; grass intermingled with moss, and embroidered with flowers. Jessamines, in conjunction with woodbines, twined around the trees; displaying their *artless beauties* to the eye, and diffusing their *delicious sweets* through the air. On either side, the boughs, rounded into a set of regular arches, opened a view into the *distant fields*, and presented me with a prospect of the *bending skies*. The little birds, all joyous and grateful for the favours of the light, were paying their acknowledgments in a *tribute* of *harmony*, and soothing themselves to rest with songs. While a French-horn, from a neighbouring seat, sent its melodious accents, softened by the length of their passage, to complete the *concert* of the *grove*.

ROVING in this agreeable manner, my thoughts were exercised on a subject, still more agreeable than the season, or the scene. I mean, our late *signal victory*, over the united forces of intestine treason, and foreign invasion. A victory, which pours joy through the present age, and will transmit its influence to generations yet unborn.—Are

not all the blessings, which can endear society, or render life itself desirable centered in our present happy constitution, and auspicious government? Were they not *all* struck at, by that impious and horrid blow, meditated at *Rome;* levelled by ***France;*** and seconded by factious spirits at *home?* Who then can be sufficiently thankful, for the gracious interposition of Providence; which has not only averted the impending ruin, but turned it with aggravating confusion on the authors of our troubles?

METHINKS, every thing *valuable* which I possess: every thing *charming*, which I behold; conspire to enhance this ever-memorable event. To this it is owing, that I can ramble unmolested along the vale of private life, and taste all the innocent satisfactions of a *contemplative* retirement —Had rebellion* succeeded in her detestable designs: instead of walking with security and complacence in these flowery paths, I might have met the *assassin* with his *dagger:* or have been obliged to abandon my habitation, and "embrace the rock for a shelter."—Farewell then, ye fragrant shades; seats of meditation, and calm repose! I should have been driven from your loved retreats, to make way for some barbarous, some *insulting victor.*—Farewell then, ye pleasing toils, and wholesome amusements of my rural hours! I should no more have reared the tender flower to the sun; no more have taught the espalier to expand her boughs; nor have fetched, any longer, from my kitchen-garden, the purest supplies of health.

HAD rebellion succeeded in her detestable designs; instead of being regaled with the *music* of the *woods*, I might have been alarmed with the sound of the trumpet, and all the thunder of war. Instead of being entertained with this *beautiful landscape*, I might have beheld our houses ransacked, and our villages plundered; I might have beheld our fenced cities encompassed with armies, and our fruitful fields "cloathed with desolation;" or have been shocked with the more frightful images, of "garments rolled in

* Referring to the rebellion, set on foot in the year 17[illegible] Which [illegible] made a very [illegible] progress [illegible] but was [illegible] extinguished by the glo[illegible] victory at Cu[illegible].

"blood," and of a ruffian's blade reeking from a brother's heart. Instead of peace, with her chearing olives, sheltering our abodes; instead of justice, with her impartial scale, securing our goods; *persecution* had brandished her sword, and *slavery* clanked her chains.

NOR are these miseries imaginary only, or the creatures of a groundless panic. There are, in a neighbouring kingdom, who very lately experienced them in all their rigour.* And, if the *malignant* spirit of *popery*, had forced itself into our church; if an *abjured pretender*, had cut his way to our throne; we could have no reason to expect a mitigation of their severity, on our behalf.—But, supposing the tender mercies of a bigotted usurper, to have been somewhat less cruel. Where, alas! would have been the encouragement to cultivate our little portion; or what pleasure could arise, from an improved spot; if both the one and the other lay, every moment, at the mercy of *lawless* power? this imbittering circumstance would spoil their relish; and by rendering them a *precarious*, would render them a *joyless* acquisition.—In vain, might the vine spread her purple clusters; in vain, be lavish of her generous juices; if *tyranny*, like a ravenous harpy, should be always hovering over the bowl, and ready to snatch it from the lip of industry, or to wrest it from the hand of liberty.

LIBERTY, that dearest of names; and *property*, that best of charters; give an additional, an inexpressible charm, to every delightful object.—See, how the declining sun has beautified the *western clouds*; has arrayed them in crimson, and skirted them with gold. Such a refinement of our domestic bliss, is property; such an improvement of our public privileges, is liberty.—When the lamp of day shall withdraw his beams, there will still remain the same collection of floating vapours; but O! how changed, how gloomy! The carnation streaks are faded; the golden edgings are wore away; and all the lovely tinges are lost,

* [illegible] entitled, *[illegible]* ---Which contains a narrative of the *[illegible]*, [illegible] hardships lately suffered by the *[illegible]*, in the Southern parts of [illegible], and closes with a most [illegible] and spirited address to the [illegible] Printed [illegible]. Price 8d.

in a *leaden-coloured louring* sadness. *Such* would be the aspect, of all these scenes of beauty, and all these abodes of pleasures; if exposed continually to the caprice of arbitrary sway, or held in a state of abject and cringing dependence.

THE sun has almost finished his daily race, and hastens to the gaol. He descends lower and lower; till his chariot-wheels seem to hover on the utmost verge of the sky. What is somewhat remarkable, the orb of light, upon the point of setting, grows considerably *broader*. The shadows of objects, just before they become blended in undistinguishable darkness, are exceedingly *lengthened*.* —Like blessings, little prized, while *possessed*: but highly esteemed, the very instant they are preparing for their flight: bitterly regretted, when once they are gone, and to be seen no more.

THE radiant globe is, now, half immersed beneath the dusky earth. Or, as the ancient poets speak, is shooting into the ocean, and sinks in the western sea.—And could I view the *sea*, at this juncture, it would yield a most amusing and curious spectacle. The rays, striking horizontally on the liquid element, give it the appearance of floating glass; or, reflected in many a different direction, form a beautiful multiplicity of colours.—A stranger, as he walks along the sandy beach; and, lost in pensive attention, listens to the murmurings of the restless flood; is agreeably alarmed by the *gay decorations* of the surface.—With entertainment, and with wonder, he sees the curling waves, here glistening with white, there glowing with purple; in one place, wearing an azure tincture; in another, glancing a cast of undulating green; in the whole, exhibiting a piece of *fluid scenery*, that may vie with yonder pencil tapestries, though wrought in the loom, and tinged with the dyes of heaven.

* The length'n'd shade, upon the mountain's head,
Before a total darkness far are spread.

VIRG.

WHILE I am transported by fancy to the shores of the ocean, the great luminary is sunk beneath the horizon, and totally disappears. The whole face of the ground is overspread with shades; or with, what one of the finest painters of nature calls, a *dun obscurity*. Only a few very superior eminences are tipt with streaming silver. The tops of groves, and lofty towers, catch the *last smiles* of day;* are still irradiated by the departing beams.—But, O! how transient is the distinction! how momentary the gift! Like all the blessings, which mortals enjoy below, it is *gone*, almost as soon as *granted*. See! how languishingly it trembles on the leafy spire; and glimmers, with a dying faintness, on the mountain's brow. The little vivacity, that remains, decays every moment. It can no longer hold its station. While I speak, it expires; and resigns the world to the gradual approaches of night.

——— Now twilight grey
Has in her fober liv'ry all things clad.†

EVERY object, a little while ago, glared with light; but now, all appears under a more qualified lustre. The animals harmonize with the insensible creation; and what was *gay* in those, as well as *glittering* in this, gives place to an universal *gravity*. In the meadows, all was jocund and sportive: but now the gamesome lambs, are grown weary of their frolicks; and the tired shepherd, has imposed silence on his pipe. In the branches, all was sprightliness and song: but now the lively green, is wrapt in the descending glooms; and no tuneful airs are heard, only the plaintive stock-dove, cooing mournfully through the grove. —Should I now be vain and trifling, the heavens and the earth would rebuke my unseasonable levity. Therefore,

* See this remarkable appearance delicately described, and wrought into a comparison, which, in my opinion, is one of the most just, beautiful, and noble pieces of imagery, to be found in modern poetry.

Night Thoughts, No. II. p. 42. 4to edit.

† MILT. *Par. Lost*, B. IV. l. 598.

be these moments devoted to thoughts, *sedate* as the closing day; *solemn*, as the face of things. And, indeed, however my social hours are enlivened with innocent pleasantry; let every evening, in her sable habit, toll the bell to serious consideration. Nothing can be more proper, for a person who walks on the borders of eternity, and is hasting continually to his final audit; nothing more proper, than daily to slip away from the circle of amusements, and frequently to relinquish the hurry of business, in order to consider and adjust "the things that belong to his peace."

SINCE the sun is departed, from whence can it proceed, that I am not involved in pitchy darkness? Whence these remainders of *diminished brightness*? Which, though scarcely forming a refulgence, soften and sooth the horrors of night. I see not the shining Ruler, yet am cheared with a real, though faint communication of his splendor.— Does he remember us, in his progress through other climes? Does he send a *detachment* of his rays, to *escort* us during his personal absence; or to *cover* (if I may use the military term) our *retreat* from the scene of action? Has he bequeathed us a dividend of his beams, sufficient to render our circumstances easy, and our situation agreeable? till sleep pours its soft oppression on the organs of sense; till sleep suspends all the operations of our hands; and intirely supersedes any farther occasion for the light.

No: it is ill-judged and unreasonable, to ascribe this beneficent conduct to the sun. Not unto him; not unto him; but unto his *Almighty Maker* we are obliged, for this pleasing attendant, this valuable legacy. The gracious Author of our being, has so disposed the collection of circumambient air, as to make it productive of this fine and wonderful effect. The sun-beams, falling on the higher parts of the aërial fluid, instead of passing on in strait lines, are bent inwards and conducted to our sight. Their natural course is over-ruled, and they are bidden to wheel about; on purpose to favour us with a welcome and salutary visit:—By which means, the blessing of light, and the season of business, are considerably prolonged. And, what is a very endearing circumstance, prolonged most considerably; when the vehement heats of summer, incline

the *student* to postpone his walk, till the temperate evening prevails; when the important labours of the harvest call the *husbandman* abroad, before the day is fully risen.

AFTER all the ardors of the sultry day, how reviving is this *coolness!*—This gives new verdure to the fading plants; new vivacity to the withering flowers; and a more exquisite fragrance to their mingled scents.—By this, the *air* also receives a new force, and is qualified to exert itself with greater activity. Qualified to brace our limbs; to heave our lungs; and co-operate, with a brisker impulse, in perpetuating the circulation of our blood.—This I might call the grand *alembic* of nature; which distils her most sovereign *cordial*, and refreshing *dews*. Incessant heat, would rob us of their beneficial agency; and oblige them to evaporate, in imperceptible exhalations. Turbulent winds, or even the gentler motions of *Aurora's* fan, would dissipate the rising vapours, and not suffer them to form a coalition. But, favoured by the stilness, and condensed by the coolness of the night; they unite in pearly drops, and create that *finely tempered* humidity, which cheers the vegetable world, as sleep exhilarates the animal.

NOR unlike to these, are the advantages of *solitude*. The world is a troubled ocean; and who can erect stable purposes, on its fluctuating waves? The world is a school of wrong; and who does not feel himself warping, to its pernicious influences?* On this sea of glass,† how insensibly we slide from our own stedfastness! some sacred *truth*, which was struck in lively characters on our souls, is obscured, if not obliterated. Some worthy *resolution*, which heaven had wrought in our breasts, is shaken, if not overthrown. Some enticing *vanity*, which we had solemnly renounced, again practices its wiles, and again captivates our affections.

* I never take up my manners from the croud, for even their conversation is poisonous.

SENEC.

† Rev. xv. 2.

How often has an unwary glance, kindled a fever of irregular desire in our hearts? How often has a word of applause, dropt luscious poison into our ears; or some disrespectful expression, raised a gust of passion in our bosoms? Our innocence is of so *tender* a constitution, that it suffers in the promiscuous croud. Our purity is of so *delicate* a complexion, that it scarce touches on the world, without contracting a stain. We see, we hear, with peril.

But here *safety* dwells. Every meddling and intrusive avocation is secluded. Silence holds the door against the strife of tongues, and all the impertinencies of idle conversation, The busy swarm of vain images, and cajoling temptations; which beset us, with a buzzing importunity, amidst the gaieties of life; are chased by these thickening shades.—Here I may, without disturbance, commune with my own heart; and learn that best of sciences, to *know myself*. Here, the soul may rally her dissipated powers, and grace recover its native energy.—This is the opportunity, to rectify every evil impression; to expel the poison, and guard against the contagion, of corrupting examples. This is the place, where I may, with advantage, apply myself to subdue the *rebel within;* and be master, not of a sceptre, but of myself.—Throng then, ye ambitious, the levees of the powerful; I will be punctual in my assignations with solitude. To a mind intent upon its own improvement, solitude has charms incomparably more engaging, than the *entertainments* presented in the theatre; or the *honors* conferred in the drawing-room.

I SAID solitude.—Am I then *alone?*—'Tis true, my acquaintance are at a distance. I have stole away from company, and am remote from all *human* observation.—But that is an alarming thought,

> Millions of *spiritual* creatures walk the earth,
> *Unseen*, both when we wake, and when we sleep.*

PERHAPS, there may be numbers of these *invisible beings*, patroling this same retreat; and joining with me, in con-

* MILT. *Par. Lost*, B IV. l. 677.

templating the Creator's works. Perhaps, those *ministring spirits*, who rejoice at the conversion of a sinner, and hold up the goings of the righteous, may follow us to the lonely recess; and, even in our most solitary moments, be our constant *attendants.*—What a pleasing awe is awakened, by such a reflection! How venerable it renders my retired walks! I am struck with reverence, as under the roof of some *sacred edifice;* or in the *presence-chamber* of some mighty monarch.—O! may I never bring any pride of Imagination, nor indulge the least dissolute affection; where such refined and exalted intelligencies exercise their watch!

'Tis possible, that I am encompassed with such a cloud of witnesses; but it is certain, that God, the *infinite eternal* God, is now and ever with me. The great Jehovah, before whom all the angelic armies bow their heads, and veil their faces, surrounds me; supports me; pervades me. "In him I live, move and have my being."—The whole world is his august temple; and, in the most sequestered corner, I appear before his adorable Majesty, no less than when I worship in his house, or kneel at his altar. In every place, therefore, let me pay him the homage of a heart, cleansed from idols, and devoted to his service. In every circumstance, let me feel no *ambition*, but to *please* him; nor covet any *happiness*, but to *enjoy* him.

How sublime is the description, and how striking the sentiment, in that noble passage of the psalms! *Whither shall I go from thy spirit, or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I climb up into the* heights of *heaven, thou art there* inthroned in light. *If I go down to the* depths of the *grave, thou art there also* in thy pavilion of darkness. *If I retire* to the remotest Eastern climes, *where the morning first takes wing: if*, swifter than the darting ray, *I* pass to the opposite regions of the west, and *remain in the uttermost parts of the sea:** shall I, in *that* distant situation,

* *Psal.* cxxxix. 7, 8, 9. There is, I think, an additional strength and beauty in the thought; if, with the learned Mr. *Mudge*, we suppose an *antithesis* between the two clauses of the last verse; as there evidently is between those of the preceding; and that they express, in a poetical stile, the extremities of the *East* and the *West*.

be beyond thy reach; or, by *this* sudden transition, escape thy notice! so far from it; that could I, with one glance of thought, transport myself beyond all the bounds of creation; I should still be incircled with the immensity of thy essence; or rather, still be inclosed in the hollow of thy hand.—Awful yet delightful truth! Let it be interwoven with every thought! and become one with the very consciousness of my existence! That I may continually *walk with GOD;* and conduct myself, in every step of my behaviour, "*as seeing HIM that is invisible.*"

THEY are the happy persons; felicity, true felicity, is *all their own;* who live under an habitual sense of GOD's omnipresence, and a sweet persuasion of his special love. If dangers threaten, that impregnable defence is at hand. Nothing can be so near to terrify, as their Almighty Guardian to secure them,---To these, the hours can never be *tedious;* and it is impossible, for them, to be *alone*. Do they step aside from the occupations of animal life? a more exalted set of employments engage their attention. They address themselves, in all the various acts of devotion, to their heavenly Father; *who* now *sees in secret, and will* hereafter *reward them openly.* They spread all their wants, before his indulgent eye; and disburden all their sorrows, into his compassionate bosom.—Do they withdraw from human society? they find themselves under the more immediate regards of their Maker. If they resign the satisfactions of social intercourse; it is to cultivate a correspondence with the condescending DEITY, and taste the pleasures of divine friendship.—What is such a *state*, but the very suburbs of heaven? What is such a *conduct*, but an antepast of eternal blessedness?

Now, my soul, the day is *ended*. The hours are all fled. They are fled to the supreme Judge, and have given in their evidence. An evidence, registered in heaven! and to be produced, at the great audit.--Happy *they!* whose improvement has kept pace with the fleeting minutes. Who have seized the important fugitives; and engaged them in the pursuit of *wisdom*, or devoted them to the service of *virtue*.

FUGITIVES indeed they are. Our moments slip away silently and insensibly. The thief steals not more unperceived from the pillaged house.—And will the runagates never stop? no: where-ever we are, however employed, time pursues his incessant course. Though *we* are listless and dilatory; the great measurer of our days presses on; still presses on, in his unwearied career;* and whirls our weeks, and months, and years away.—Is it not then surprisingly strange, to hear people complain of the *tediousness* of their time, and how *heavy* it hangs upon their hands? To see them contrive a variety of amusing artifices, to accelerate its flight, and get rid of its burden?—Ah! thoughtless mortals! why need you urge the headlong torrent? Your days are swifter than a *post*; which, carrying dispatches of the last importance, with unremitted speed scours the road. They pass away like the nimble *ships*; which have the wind in their wings, and skim along the watry plain. They hasten to their destined period, with the rapidity of an *eagle*; which leaves the stormy blast behind her, while she cleaves the air, and darts upon her prey.†

Now the day is gone, how *short* it appears! When my fond eye beheld it in *perspective*, it seemed a very considerable space. Minutes, crowded upon minutes; and hours, ranged behind hours; exhibited an extensive draught, and flattered me with a long progression of pleasures. But, upon a *retrospective* view, how wonderfully is the scene altered! The landscape, large and spacious, which a warm fancy drew; brought to the test of cool experience, shrinks into a span. Just as the shores vanish, and mountains dwindle to a spot; when the sailor, surrounded by skies and ocean, throws his last look on his native land.—How clearly do I now discover the cheat! May it never impose upon my unwary imagination, again! I find, there is no-

* Time, irreparable time! still wings his flight.——VIRG.

† *Job.* ix. 25, 26. By these three very expressive images, the inspired poet represents the *unintermitted* and *rapid* flight of time.

thing abiding on this side eternity. A *long* duration, in a state of *finite* existence, is mere illusion.

PERHAPS, the *healthy*, and the *gay*, may not readily credit the serious truth; especially from a young pen, and new to its employ. Let us then refer ourselves to the decision of the *antient*. Ask some venerable old person, who is just marching off the mortal stage; *how many have been the days of the years of thy life?** It was a monarch's question; and therefore can want no recommendation, to the fashionable world.—Observe, how he shakes his hoary locks, and from a deep-felt conviction replies: "*fourscore years* have "finished their rounds to furrow these cheeks, and cloath "this head in snow. Such a term may seem long and "large, to inconsiderate youth. But O! how short, how "scanty, to one that has made the experiment! *Short*, as "a gleam of transient sunshine; *scanty*, as the shadow "that departeth. Methinks, it was but yesterday, that I "exchanged my childish sports, for manly exercises; and "now I am resigning them both, for the sleep of death. "As soon as we are *born*, we begin to draw to our *end*; "and how small is the interval, between the cradle and "the tomb!"—O! may we believe this testimony of mature age! May every evening bring it, with clearer evidence to our minds! And may we form such an estimate of the little pittance, while it is upon the advancing hand, as we shall certainly make, when the sands are all run down!

LET me add one reflection on the *work* to be *done*, while this shuttle is flying through the loom.† A work of no small difficulty, yet of the utmost consequence!—Hast thou not seen, hast thou not known, the excellent of the earth; who were living images of their Maker? his *divine likeness* was transfused into their hearts, and beamed forth in all their conduct. Beamed forth in meekness of wisdom, and purity of affection; in all the tender offices of love, and all

* Gen. xlvii. 8. *Heb. Bib.*

† "My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle." *Job.* vii. 6.

the noble efforts of zeal. To be stampt with the same beautiful signature, and to be followers of them, as they were of CHRIST; *this, this* is thy *business*. On the accomplishment of this, thy eternal all depends. And, will an affair of such unspeakable weight, admit of a moment's delay, or consist with the least remissness?—Especially, since much of thy appointed time is already elapsed; and the remainder is *all uncertainty*, save only that it is in the very act to fly.—Or suppose, thou hadst made a covenant with the grave, and wast assured of reaching the age of *Methuselah*; how soon would even such a lease expire!—Extend it, if you please, still farther; and let it be *co-existent* with nature itself. How inconsiderable is the addition! For, yet a very little while, and the commissioned Archangel lifts up his hand to heaven, and swears by the Almighty name, *that time shall be no longer*. Then, *abused* opportunities, will never return; and *new* opportunities, will never more be offered. Then, should negligent mortals wish—wish ever so passionately—for a few hours—a few moments only—to be thrown back from the opening eternity; *thousands* of worlds would not be able to procure the grant.

SHALL I, now, be industrious to shorten, what is no longer than a span; or to quicken the pace of what is ever on the wing? Shall I squander away what is *unutterably important*, while it lasts; and, when once departed, is *altogether irrevocable!* O! my soul, forbear the folly; forbear the desperate extravagance. Wilt thou chide as a loiterer, the arrow that boundeth from the string; or sweep away diamonds, as the refuse of thy house?—Throw time away! astonishing, ruinous, irreparable profuseness! Throw empires away, and be blameless. But O! be parsimonious of thy days; husband thy precious hours. They go connected, indissolubly connected, with heaven or hell.*

* I remember to have seen upon a sun-dial in a physician's garden at Northampton, the following inscription; which, I think, is the most proper motto for the instrument, that measures out time; and the most striking admonition, that can possibly be presented to every eye:

AB HOC MOMENTO PENDET ÆTERNITAS.

Improved, they are a sure pledge of everlasting glory; *wasted*, they are a sad preface to never-ending confusion and anguish.

WHAT a *profound silence* has composed the world! So profound is the silence, that my very breath seems a noise; the ticking of my watch is distinctly heard; if I do but stir it creates a disturbance.—There is, now, none of that confused din, from the tumultuous city: no voice of jovial rustics, from the neighbouring meadow: no chirping melody from the shady thicket.—Every lip is sealed. Not the least whisper, invades the air; nor the least motion, rustles among the boughs. *Echo*, herself, sleeps unmolested. The expanded ear, though all attention, catches no sound, but the liquid lapse of a distant murmuring stream.

All things are hush'd, as nature's self lay dead.

IF, in the midst of this deep and universal composure, ten thousand bellowing thunders should burst over my head; and rend the skies, with their united vollies; how should I bear so *unexpected a shock?* It would stun my senses, and confound my thoughts. I should shudder in every limb; perhaps, sink to the earth with terror.—Consider then, O Mortals! consider the much more *prodigious* and *amazing* call, which will, ere long, alarm your sleeping bones. When the tenants of the the tomb have slumbered, in the most undisturbed repose, for a multitude of ages; what an inconceivable consternation must the *shout* of the *Archangel*, and the trump of GOD, occasion! Will it not wound the ear of the ungodly; and affright, even to distraction, the impenitent sinner? The stupendous peal will sound through the vast of heaven; will shake the foundations of nature; and pierce even the deepest recesses of the grave. And how—O! how will the prisoners of Divine

The weighty sense of which, I know not how to express in English, more happily than in those words of Dr. Watts;

Good God! on what a slender thread
[Or, on what a moment of time]
Hang everlasting things!

Justice, be able to endure that tremendous *summons*, to a far more tremendous tribunal?—Do thou, my soul, listen to the *still voice* of the gospel. Attend, in this thy day, to the gracious invitations of thy Saviour. Then, shall that great midnight cry lose its *horror*, and be *music* in thy ears. It shall be welcome to thy reviving clay, as the tidings of liberty, to the dungeon captive; as the year of jubilee to the harassed slave. This, this shall be its charming import; "*awake, and* "*sing, ye that dwell in dust.*"*

What a general *cessation* of *affairs*, has this dusky hour introduced! A little while ago, all was hurry, hurry. Life and activity exerted themselves in a thousand busy forms. The city swarmed, with passing and repassing multitudes. All the country was sweat and dust. The air floated in perpetual agitation, by the flitting birds, and humming bees. *Art* sat prying with her piercing eyes; while industry plied her restless hands.—But see; how all this fervent and, impetuous bustle, is fled with the setting sun. The beasts are slunk, to their grassy couch; and the winged people are retired, to their downy nests. The hammer has resigned its sounding task, and the file ceases to repeat its flying touches. Shut is the well-frequented shop, and its threshold no longer worn by the feet of numerous customers. The villlage-swain lies drowned in slumbers; and even his trusty dog, who, for a considerable time stood centry at the door, is extended at his ease, and snores with his master.—In every place *toil* reclines her head, and *application* folds her arms. All interests seem to be forgot; all all pursuits are suspended; all employment is sunk away; sunk away with those fluttering myriads, which lately sported in the sun's departing rays.—'Tis like the sabbath of universal nature; or as though the pulse of life stood still.

Thus will it be, with our infinitely momentous concerns; when once *the shadows of the evening*, (that long evening, which follows the footsteps of death!) *are stretched over us.*

* Isai. xxvi. 19.

The dead cannot seek unto GOD; the living, alone, are possesed of this inestimable opportunity.* "There "is no work or device, no repentance or amendment, in the grave, whither we are all hasting." When once that *closing scene* is advanced, we shall have no other part to act on this *earthly theatre*. Then, the sluggard, who has slumbered away life in a criminal inactivity, must lie down in hopeless distress, and everlasting sorrow. Then, that awful doom will take place, "He that is *holy*, let him be holy still; and "he that is *filthy*, let him be filthy for ever."

Is it so, my soul? is this the *only*, *only* time alloted, for obtaining the great reward, and making thy salvation sure? And art thou lulled in a *vain security*; or dreaming in a *supine inadvertency?* Start, O! start from thy trance. Gird up the loins of thy mind, and work while it is day. Improve the present seed-time, that eternity may yield a joyful harvest.—We especially, who are watchmen in *Israel*, and ministers of the glorious gospel; may *we* be awakened, by this consideration, to all assiduity in our holy office. Some or other of *our people*, are ever and anon departing into the invisible state; all *our friends*, are making incessant approaches to their long home; and *we ourselves*, shall very shortly be transmitted to the confinement of the tomb. *This* is the favourable juncture, wherein alone we can contribute to their endless welfare. This is the crisis, the all-important *crisis*, of their final felicity. Instantly, therefore, let us pour in our wholesome instructions; instantly, let us ply them with our earnest exhortations. A moment's delay, may be an irreparable loss; may be irretrievable ruin. While we procrastinate, a fatal stroke may† intervene; and place *us*, beyond the power of

* "Behold! now is the accepted time. Behold! now is the day of salvation."—2 *Cor*. vi. 2.

† Haste, haste, he lies in wait, he's at the door,
Insidious death! should his strong hand arrest,
No composition sets the pris'ner free.

administering; or place *them*, beyond all possibility of receiving, any spiritual good.*

How frequently is the face of nature *changed!* and, by changing, made more *agreeable!*—The long-continued glitter of the day, renders the soothing shades of the evening doubly welcome. Nor does the morn ever purple the East with so engaging a lustre, as after the gloom of a dark and dismal night.—At present, a *calm* of tranquility is spread through the universe. The weary winds have forgot to blow. The gentle gales have fanned themselves asleep. Not so much as a single leaf nods. Even the quivering aspin rests. *And not one breath curls o'er the stream.*—Sometimes, on the contrary, the *tempest* summons all the forces of the air; and pours itself, with resistless fury, from the angry North. The whole atmosphere is tossed into tumultuous confusion, and the watry world is heaved to the clouds. The astonished mariner, and his straining vessel, now scale the rolling mountain, and hang dreadfully visible on the broken surge: now shoot, with head-long impetuosity, into the yawning gulph; and neither hulk, nor mast, is seen. The storm sweeps over the continent: raves along the city-streets: struggles through the forest-boughs; and terrifies the savage nations with a howl, more wildly horrid than their own. The knotty oaks bend before the blast; their iron trunks groan; and their stubborn limbs are dashed to the ground. The lofty dome rocks; and even the solid tower totters on its basis.

Such variations are kindly contrived, and with an evident condescension to the fickleness of our taste. Because, a perpetual repetition on the *same* objects, would create satiety, and *disgust;* therefore, the indulgent Father of our race has diversified the universal scene, and bid every appearance bring with it the charm of novelty.—This circum-

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† The case, represented by the prophet (1 *Kings* xx. 40.) seems perfectly applicable on this occasion. *As thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone.* So, while we are either *remiss* in our function, or laying ourselves out upon *inferior* cares, the people of our charge may be gone:—gone beyond the influence of our counsels; beyond the reach of our prayers: gone into the *unchangeable* and eternal state.

stance is *beneficial*, as well as *entertaining*. Providence, ever gracious to mortals; ever intent upon promoting our felicity; has taken care to mingle, in the constitution of things, what is pleasiug to our imagination, with what is serviceable to our interests. The piercing winds, and rugged aspect of winter, render the balmy gales, and flowery scenes of spring, peculiarly delightful. At the same time, the keen frosts mellow the soil, and prepare it for the hand of industry. The rushing rains impregnate the glebe, and fit it to become a magazine of plenty. The earth is a great *laboratory;* and December's cold collects the gross materials, which are *sublimated* by the refining warmth of May. The air is a pure elastic fluid; and were it always to remain in *this* motionless serenity, it would lose much of its active spring; was it never agitated by *those* wholesome concussions, it would contract a noisome, perhaps, a pestilential taint. In which cases, our respiration, instead of purifying, would corrupt the vital juices; instead of supplying us with refreshment, would be a source of diseases; or every gasp we draw, might be unavoidable death.—How then should we admire, how should we adore, that happy union of benignity and wisdom; which, from a *variety* of dispensations, produces an *uniformity* of good! Produces a perpetual succession of delights, and an uninterrupted series of advantages!

The *darkness* is now at its height; and I cannot but admire the obliging manner of its taking place. It comes not with a blunt and abrupt incivility, but makes gentle and respectful advances. A *precipitate* transition, from the splendors of day, to all the horrors of midnight, would be inconvenient and frightful. It would bewilder the traveller in his journey; it would strike the creation with amazement; and, perhaps, be pernicious to the organs of sight. Therefore the gloom rushes not upon us instantaneously, but increases by slow degrees; and, sending *twilight* before as its *harbinger*, decently advertises us of its approach. By this means, we are neither alarmed, nor incommodated, by the change; but are able to take all suitable and timely measures, for its reception.—Thus graciously has Providence regulated, not only the *grand vicissitudes* of the sea-

sons, but also the *common interchanges* of light and darkness, with an apparent reference to our comfort.

Now, the fierce *inhabitants* of the *forest* forsake their dens. A thousand grim forms, a thousand growling monsters, pace the desart. Death is in their jaws, while stung with hunger, and athirst for blood, they roam their nightly rounds.

UNFORTUNATE the *traveller*, who is overtaken by the night, in those dismal wilds! how must he stand aghast, at the mingled yell of ravenous throats, and lions roaring after ther prey! Defend him, propitious heaven! or else he must see his endearing spouse, and hail his native home, no more!—Now, the prowling wolf, like a murderous ruffian, dogs the shepherd's footsteps, and besets his bleating charge. The fox, like a crafty felon, steals to the thatched cottage, and carries off the feathered booty.

HAPPY for the world, were these the only destroyers that walk in darkness. But, alas! there are savages in human shape; who, muffled in shades, infest the abodes of civilized life. The *sons* of *violence* make choice of this season,* to perpetrate the most outrageous acts of wrong and robbery. The *adulterer* waiteth for the twilight; and, baser than the villain on the highway, betrays the honor of his bosom-friend. Now, *faction* forms her close cabals, and whispers her traiterous insinuations. Now, *rebellion* plans her accursed plots, and prepares the train to blow a nation into ruin. Now crimes, which hide their odious heads in the day, haunt the seats of society, and stalk through the gloom with audacious front. Now, the *vermin* of the *stews* crawl from their lurking holes, to wallow in sin, and spread contagion through the night. Each soothing himself with the fond notion, that all is safe; that no eye sees.

ARE they then concealed? Preposterous madmen! to draw the curtain between their infamous practices, and a little set of mortals; but lay them open, to all these chaste

* ——— When night
Darkens the streets, then wander forth the sons
Of *Belial*, flown with insolence and wine.
MILTON.

and *wakeful eyes* of heaven!* as though the moon and stars were made, to light men to their revels, and not to GOD. —Are they then concealed? no, truly. Was every one of these vigilant luminaries closed; an eye *keener* than the lightning's flash, an eye *brighter* than ten thousand suns, beholds their every motion. Their thickest shades are beaming day,† to the jealous Inspector, and supreme Judge of human actions.—Deluded creatures! have ye not heard, have ye not read, "that clouds and darkness are "HIS majestic residence?"‡ In that very gloom to which you fly for covert, he erects his throne. What you reckon your *screen*, is the bar of his tribunal. O! remember this! stand in awe, and sin not. Remember, that the great and terrible God *is about your path*, when you take your midnight range; is *about your bed*, when you indulge the loose desire; *and spies out all your ways*, be they ever so secretly conducted, or artfully disguised.

Some minutes ago, a passenger crossed along the road. His horse's foot struck the ground, and fetched fire from a flint. My eye, tho' at a distance, catched the view; and saw, with *great clearness*, the transient sparkles: of which, had I been ever so near, I should not have discerned the *least glimpse*, under the blaze of day.—So, when sickness has drawn a *veil* over the gaiety of our hearts; when misfortunes have eclipsed the splendor of our outward circumstances; how many *important convictions* present themselves, with the brightest evidence! Under the sunshine of prosperity, they lay undiscovered; but, when some intervening cloud has darkened the scene, they emerge from their obscurity, and even glitter upon our minds. Then, the *world*, that delusive cheat, confesses her emptiness:

* The moon still sees, and still the stars
The eyes of heaven, expanded witness bear.

† This is finely, and very forcibly, expressed by the psalmist: "If I say, peradventure the darkness shall cover me; then shall my night be turned to day." Or, as it may be rendered somewhat more emphatically, "even the night shall be broad day-light all around me." *Psal.* cxxxix. 10.

‡ Psal. xcvii. 2.

but JESUS, the bright and morning-star, beams forth with inimitable lustre. Then *Vice* loses all her fallacious allurements; that painted strumpet is horrible, as the hags of hell: but *Virtue*, despised Virtue, gains loveliness from a louring Providence, and treads the shades with more than mortal charms.—May this reconcile me, and all the *sons of sorrow*, to our appointed share of suffering! If tribulation tend to dissipate the inward darkness, and pour heavenly dew upon our minds; welcome distress; welcome disappointment; welcome whatever our froward flesh, or peevish passions, would *miscal* calamities. *These light afflictions, which are but for a moment*, shall sit easy upon our spirits; since they befriend our knowledge; promote our faith; and so "*work out for us, a far more exceeding and* "*eternal weight of glory.*"

How has this darkness snatched every splendid and graceful object from my sight! it has dashed the sponge over the pictures of spring, and destroyed all the *delicate distinctions* of things. Where are now the fine things, which so lately charmed me from the glowing parterre? The blush is struck out, from the cheeks of the rose; and the snowy hue, is dropt from the lily. I cast my eyes toward a magnificent Seat; but the aspiring columns, and fair expanded front, are mingled in rude confusion. Without the sun, all the elegance of the blooming world is a *mere blank*; all the symmetry of architecture, is a *shapeless heap*.

Is not this an expressive emblem of the loveliness, which the *Sun of Righteousness* transfuses into all that is amiable? Was it not for JESUS, and his merits, I should sigh with anguish of spirt; even while I rove through ranks of the most beautiful flowers, or breathe amidst a wilderness of sweets. Was it not for JESUS, and his merits; I should roam like some *disconsolate spectre*, even through the smiles of creation, and the caresses of fortune. My conversation in this world, though dressed in the most engaging forms of external pleasure, would be like the passage of a *condemned malefactor*, through enamelled meadows, and bowers of bliss, to be broke upon the wheel, or to expire on the rack. But a daily reflection, on the LAMB's atoning blood; a com-

fortable trust, that my soul is reconciled through this divine expiation, this is the ray, the golden ray, which irradiates the face of the universe. This is the *oil* of *beauty*, which makes all things wear a chearful aspect; and the *oil* of *gladness*, which disposes the spectator to behold them with delight.* This, this is the secret charm, which teaches nature, in all her prospects and all her productions, so exquisitely to please.

"MAN goeth forth to his work, and to his labour, till the evening." But then his strength fails; his spirits flag; and he stands in need, not only of some respite from toil, but of some kindly and sovereign refreshments.—What an admirable provision for this purpose, is *sleep!* Sleep introduces a most welcome vacation, both for the soul and body. The exercises of the brain, and the labours of the hand, are at once discontinued. So that the *weary* limbs repair thier exhausted vigour; while the *pensive* thoughts drop their load of sorrows, and the *busy* ones rest from the fatigue of application. Most reviving cordial; equaly beneficial to our animal and intellectual powers. It supplies the fleshly machine, and keeps all its nice movements in a proper posture for easy play. It animates the thinking faculties with fresh alacrity, and rekindles their ardor for the studies of the dawn. Without these enlivening recruits, how soon would the most robust constitution, be wasted into a *walking skeleton;* and the most learned sage, degenerate into a *hoary idiot!*—Some time ago, I beheld, with surprize, poor *Florio*. His air was wild; his countenance meagre; his thoughts roving, and speech disconcerted. Inquiring the

* Thus applied, that fine piece of flattery, addressed to the Heathen Emperor, is strictly and literally true.

When faith presents the saviour's death,
And whispers, "this is thine;"
Sweetly my rising hours advance,
And peacefully decline.

While such my views, the radian sun
Sheds a more sprightly ray;
Each object smiles; all nature charms:
I sing my cares away.

cause of this strange alteration, I was informed, that, for several nights, he had not closed his eyes in sleep. For want of which *noble restorative*, that sprightly youth, (who was once the life of the discourse, and the darling of the company) is become a spectacle of misery and horror.

How many of my fellow-creatures are, at this very instant, confined to the bed of languishing; and complaining with that illustrious sufferer of old, *wearisom nights are appointed to me!** Instead of indulging soft repose, they are counting the tedious hours; telling every striking clock; or measuring the very moments, by their throbbing pulse. How many harassed with *pain*, most passionately long to make some little truce with their agonies, in peaceful slumbers! how many, sick with *disquietude*, and restless even on their downy pillows, would purchase this transient oblivion of their woes, almost at any Rate!—That, which wealth cannot procure; which multitudes sigh for in vain; thy God has bestowed on thee, times out of number. The *welcome visitant*, punctual at the needed hour, has entered thy chamber, and poured his poppies round thy couch. Has gently closed thy eye-lids, and shed his slumberous dews over all thy senses.

Since sleep is so absolutely necesary; so inestimably valuable; observe, what a *fine apparatus* Almighty goodness has made, to accommodate us with the balmy blessing. With how kind a precauton he removes whatever might obstruct its access, or impede its influence! He draws around us the *curtain of darkness*; which inclines us to a drowsy indolence, and conceals every object, that might too strongly agitate the sense. He conveys *peace* ino our *apartments*; and imposes silence, on the whole creation. Every animal is bidden to tread softly or rather to cease from its motion, when man is retiring to his repose.—May we not discern, in this gracious disposition of things, the tender cares of a *nursing-mother*; who hushes every noise, and secludes every disturbance, when she has laid the child of her love to rest? *So*, by such soothing cir-

* Job vii, 3.

cumstances, and gently-working opiates, *HE giveth, to his beloved, sleep.**

ANOTHER signal instance of a providence intent upon our welfare, is, that we are preserved *safe* in the hours of *slumber*. How are we then lost to all apprehension of danger; even though the murderer be at our bed-side, or his naked sword at our breast! Destitute of all concern for ourselves, we are unable to *think of*, much more to *provide for*, our own security. At these moments, therefore we lie open to innumerable perils: perils, from the resistless rage of flames: perils, from the insidious artifices of theives, or the outrageous violence of robbers: perils, from the *irregular workings* of our own thoughts, and especially from the incursions of our spiritual enemy.

WHAT dreadful mischief might that restless, that implacable *adversary* of *mankind* work, was there not an invisible hand to controul his rage, and protect poor mortals! What scenes of horror might he represent to our imaginations, and "scare us with dreams, or terrify us with visions!" But the *Keeper* of *Israel*, who never slumbers nor sleeps, interposes in our behalf; at once to *cherish* us under his wings, and to *defend* us with a shield.

IT is said of *Solomon*, "that threescore valiant men were "about his bed; all expert in war; every one with his "sword upon his thigh, because of fear in the night.† But one greater than *Solomon*; one mightier than myriads of armed hosts; even the great JEHOVAH, in whom is everlasting strength: he vouchsafes to *encamp about our houses*, to watch over our sleeping minutes, and to stop all the avenues of ill.—O! the unwearied and condescending goodness of our Creator! who *lulls* us to our *rest*, by bringing on the silent shades; and *plants* his own ever-watchful eye as our *centinel*, while we enjoy the needful repose.

REASON, now, resigns her sedate office; and *fancy*, extravagant fancy, leads the mind through a maze of vanity. The head is crouded with false images, and tanta-

* Psal. cxxvii. 2. † Cant. iii. 7, 8.

lized with the most ridiculous misapprehensions of things. Some, are expatiating amidst *fairy fields*, and gathering garlands of visionary bliss; while their bodies are stretched on a wisp of straw, and sheltered by the cobwebs of a barn. Others, quite insensible of their rooms of state, are mourning in a doleful *dungeon*, or struggling with the raging billows. Perhaps, with hasty steps, they climb the craggy cliff; and, with real anxiety, fly from the imaginary danger. Or else, benumbed with sudden fear, and finding themselves unable to escape, they give up at once their hopes, and their efforts; and, though reclined on a couch of ivory, are sinking, all helpless and distressed, in the furious whirlpool. So unaccountable are the *vagaries* of the *brain*, while sleep maintains its dominion over the limbs!

But is this the only season, when absurd incoherent irregularities play their magic on our minds? Are there not those who *dream*, even in their *waking* moments!—Some pride themselves in a notion of superior excellency, because the royal favour has annexed a few splendid titles to their names; or because the dying silkworm has bequeathed her finest threads, to cover their nakedness.—Others congratulate their own signal happiness, because loads of golden lumber are amassed together in their coffers; or promise themselves a most superlative felicity indeed, when some thousands more are added to the useless heap.—Nor are there wanting others, who gape after *substantial* satisfaction from *airy* applause; and flatter themselves with, I know not what, immortality in the momentary buz of renown.

Are any of these a whit more reasonable in their opinions, than the poor ragged wretch in his reveries; who, while snoring under a hedge, exults in the possession of his stately palace, and sumptuous furniture?—If persons, who are *very vassals* to their own *domineering* passions, and led captive by numberless temptations; if these persons pique themselves with a conceit of their liberty, and fancy themselves the *generous* and *gallant* spirits of the age; where is the difference between theirs, and the madman's

frenzy; who, though chained to the floor, is throned in thought, and wielding an imaginary sceptre?—In a word; as many as borrow their dignity from a plume of feathers, or the gaudy trappings of fortune; as many as send their souls to seek for bliss in the blandishments of sense, or in any thing short of the divine favour, and a well-grounded hope of the incorruptible inheritance;* what are they, but dreamers with their eyes open; *delirious*, though in *health!*

WOULD you see their picture, drawn to the very life; and the success of their schemes, calculated with the utmost exactness; cast your eye upon that fine representation, exhibited by the prophet: *It shall be even as when a hungry man dreameth, and behold, he eateth; but he awaketh, and his soul is empty: or as when a thirsty man dreameth, and behold, he drinketh: but he awaketh, and behold, he is faint, and his soul hath appetite.*† Such is the race, and such the prize, of all those candidates for honour and joy; who run wide from the mark of the high calling of GOD, in CHRIST JESUS. They live in vanity, and die in woe.—Awaken us, merciful Lord, from these *noon-tide trances!* Awaken us, while conviction may turn to our advantage, and not serve only to increase our torment. O! let our "eyes be enlightened, to discern the things that are excellent;" and no longer be imposed upon by fantastic appearances, which, however *pompous* they may seem, will prove more *empty* than the visions of the night, more *transient* than the dream that is forgotten.

HAVING mentioned sleep and dreams, let me once again consider those remarkable incidents of our frame: so very remarkable, that I venture to call them, a kind of experimental *mystery*, and little less than a standing *miracle.*—Behold the most *vigorous constitution*, when stretched on the bed of ease, and totaly resigned to the slumbers of the night. Its activity is oppressed with fetters of indolence;

* These give a sacred, and home-felt delight,
A *sober certainty* of *waking* bliss.
MILT. *Comus.*

† Isai. xxix. 8.

its strength is consigned over to a temporary annihilation; the nerves are like a bow unstrung, and the whole animal system is like a motionless log.—Behold a person of the most *delicate sensations*, and *amiable dispositions*. His eyes, though thrown wide open, admit not the visual ray; at least, distinguish not objects. His ears, with the organs unimpaired, and articulate accents beating upon the drum, perceive not the sound; at least apprehend not the meaning. The senses, and their exquisitely fine feelings, are overwhelmed with an unaccountable stupefaction. You call him a *social* creature; but where are his social affections? he knows not the father, that begat him; and takes no notice of the friend, that is as his own soul. The wife of his bosom may expire by his side, and he lie more unconcerned than a Barbarian. The children of his body, may be tortured with the severest pangs; and he, even in the same chamber, remain untouched with the least commiseration.

Behold the most *ingenious scholar*: whose judgment is piercing, and able to trace the most intricate difficulties of science; his taste refined, and quick to relish all the beauties of sentiment and composition. Yet, at this juncture, the thinking faculties are unhinged, and the intellectual oeconomy quite disconcerted. Instead of close-connected reasonings, nothing but a disjointed huddle of absurd ideas: instead of well-digested principles, nothing but a disorderly jumble of crude conceptions. The most palpable delusions, impose upon his imagination. The whole night passes, and he frequently mistakes it for a single minute: is not sensible of the transition, hardly sensible of any duration.

Yet, no sooner does the morning dawn, and day-light enter the room; but this strange inchantment vanishes. The man awakes, and finds himself *possessed* of all the valuable endowments; which, for several hours, were suspended, or lost. His sinews are braced, and fit for action. His senses are alert and keen. The romantic visionary brightens into the master of reason. The frozen or benumbed affections, melt with tenderness, and glow with benevolence. And, what is beyond measure surprizing, the intoxicated mind works itself sober, not by *slow degrees*;

but, in the *twinkling* of an eye, recovers from its perturbation.

Why does not the stupor, which deadens all the nice operations of the animal powers, hold fast its possession? When the thoughts are once disadjusted, why are they not always in confusion? How is it, that they are rallied in a moment; and, from the wildest irregularity, reduced to the most orderly array?—From an inactivity, resembling death; how is the body so *suddenly* restored, to vigour and agility? From extravagancies, bordering upon madness; how is the understanding *instantaneously* re-established, in sedateness and harmony?—Surely, "this is the LORD's doing, "and it should be marvellous in our eyes:" should awaken our gratitude, and inspirit our praise.

THIS is the time, in which *ghosts* are supposed to make their appearance. Now, the *timorous imagination* teems with phantoms, and creates numberless terrors to itself. Now dreary forms, in sullen state, stalk along the gloom; or, swifter than lightning, glide across the shades. Now, voices more than mortal* are heard from the echoing vaults, and groans issue from the hollow tombs. Now, melancholy spectres visit the ruins of ancient monasteries, and frequent the solitary dwellings of the dead. They pass and repass, in substantial images, along the forsaken galleries, or take their determined stand, over some lamented grave.

How often has the school-boy fetched a long circuit, and trudged many a needless step, in order to avoid the haunted church-yard? or, if necessity, sad necessity, has obliged him to cross the spot; where *human skulls* are lodged below, and the *baleful yews* shed supernumerary horrors above; a thousand hideous stories rush into his memory. Fear adds wings to his feet; he scarce touches the ground; dares not once look behind him; and blesses his good fortune, if no

* When night has spread her sable curtain round,
Tremendous voices through the groves resound;
Pale spectres swiftly bounding thro' the air,
In mystic, frightful shapes around appear.

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frightful sound purred at his heels, if no ghastly shape bolted upon his sight.

'Tis strange, to observe the excessive timidity, which possesses many people's minds on this *fanciful occasion*; while they are void of all concern, on others of the most *tremendous import*. Those, who are startled, in any dark and lonely walk, at the *very apprehension* of a single spectre; are nevertheless unimpressed at the *sure prospect*, of entering into a whole world of disembodied beings. Nay, are without any emotions of awe, though they know themselves to be hastening into the presence of the Great, Infinite, and Eternal Spirit.

Should some pale messenger from the regions of the dead, draw back our curtains at the hour of midnight; and, appointing some particular place, say, as the horrid apparition to *Brutus*, *I'll meet thee there*:* I believe the boldest heart would feel something like a panic; would seriously think upon the adventure, and be in pain for the event. But, when a voice from heaven cries, in the awakening language of the prophet, *prepare to meet thy God, O* Israel;† how little is the warning regarded! How soon is it forgotten! Preposterous stupidity! To be *utterly unconcerned*, where it is the truest wisdom to take the alarm; and to be *all trepidation*, where there is nothing really terrible!

Do thou, my soul, remember thy Saviour's admonition;
" *I will forewarn you, whom you shall fear*. Fear not these
" imaginary horrors of the night. But fear that awful Be-
" ing; whose revelation of himself, though with expres-
" sions of peculiar mercy, made *Moses*, his favourite ser-
" vant, tremble exceedingly. Whose manifestation, when
" he appears with purposes of inexorable vengeance, will
" make *mighty conquerors*; who were familiar with dan-

* The story of *Brutus*, and his *evil genius*, is well known. Nor must it be denied, that the precise words of the spectre to the hero were, *I'll meet thee at Philippi*. But as this would not answer my purpose, I was obliged to make an alteration, in the circumstance of *place*.

† Amos iv. 12.

"gers, and estranged to dismay; call upon the mountains "to fall on them, and the rocks to cover them. The me-"nace of whose majestic eye, when he comes attended "with thousand thousands of his immortal hosts, will make "the very heavens cleave asunder, and the earth flee away. "—O! dread HIS displeasure; secure HIS favour; and "then thou may'st commit all thy other anxieties to the "wind. Thou may'st laugh at every other fear.

THIS brings to my mind a memorable and amazing occurrence, recorded in the book of *Job*.† Which is, I think, no inconsiderable proof of the *real existence* of apparitions, on some *very extraordinary* emergencies; while it dscountenances those legions of idle tales, which superstition has raised, and credulity received. Since it teaches us, that if, at any time, those visitants from the unknown world, render themselves perceivable by mortals, it is not upon any errand of frivolous consequence; but, to *convey intelligences* of the utmost moment, or to *work impressions* of the highest advantage.

'TWAS in the *dead of night*. All nature lay shrouded in darkness. Every creature was buried in sleep. The most profound silence reigned through the universe. In these solemn moments, *Eliphaz* alone, all wakeful and solitary, was musing upon sublime and heavenly subjects.—When, lo! an awful being, from the invisible realms, burst into his aparrment. *A spirit passed before his face.* Astonishment seized the beholder. His bones shivered within him; his flesh trembled all over him; and the hair of his head stood erect with horror.—Sudden and unexpected, was the appearance of the phantom; not such its departure. *It stood still*, to present itself more fully to his view. It made a solemn pause, to prepare his mind for some momentous Message.—After which, a voice was heard. A voice for the importance of its meaning, worthy to be had in everlasting rememberance; for the solemnity of its delivery, enough to [illegible] a heart of stone. It spoke; and this was the pu[illegible] its words;—" *Shall* man, *frail man, be just*

* Job iv. 12, 14, &c.

before the mighty GOD*? shall* even *the most accomplished of mortals be pure in the sight of his Maker? Behold* and, consider it attentively. *He put no such trust in his* most exalted *servants,* as should bespeak them incapable of defect. *And his* very *angels he charged with folly;* as sinking "in the highest perfection of their holiness, infinitely beneath his transcendent glories; as falling, in all the fidelity of their "obedience, inexpressibly short of the homage due to his "adorable majesty. If angelic natures must not presume to "justify, either themselves, or their services, before uncreated purity; *how much more* absurd is such a notion, how much more impious such an attempt, in *them that dwell in houses of clay;* whose orignal is from the dust, and whose state is all imperfection"!

I Would observe from hence, the very singular necessity of that *poverty* of *spirit,* which intirely *renounce* its own attainments; and most thankfully *submits* to the righteousness of the incarnate God.—To inculcate this lesson, the Son of the blessed came down from heaven; and pressed no other principle, with so repeated an importunity, on his his hearers. To instil the same doctrine, the Holy Ghost touched the lips of the apostles with sacred eloquence; and made it an eminent part of their commission, "to demolish "every high imagination." That no expedient might be wanting, to give it a deep and lasting efficacy on the human mind; a phantom arises from the valley of the shadow of death, or a teacher descends from the habitation of spirits. Whatever then we neglect; let us not neglect to cultivate *this grace,* which has been so variously taught, so powerfully enforced.

Hark! a *doleful voice*—with sudden starts, and hideous screams, it disturbs the silence of the peaceful night. 'Tis the *screech owl,* sometimes in frantic, sometimes in disconsolate accents, uttering her woes.* She flies the vocal grove, and shuns the society of all the featherd choir. The blooming gardens, and flowery meads, have no [illegible] for her.

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* The shades of night are spread. The owl alone
From high-roof'd ridges sadly makes her moan;
Lengthens her voice to tell of all her woes,
And shivering stands, when Boreas keenly blows.

Obscene shades, ragged ruins, and walls overgrown with ivy, are her favourite haunts. Above, the mouldering precipice nods, and threatens a fall: below, the toad crawls, or the poisonous adder hisses. The sprightly morning, which awakens other animals into joy, administers no pleasure to this gloomy recluse. Even the smiling face of day, is her aversion; and all its lovely scenes create nothing but uneasiness.

So, just so, would it fare with the *ungodly;* were it possible to suppose their admission, into the chaste and bright abodes of endless felicity. They would find nothing but disappointment and shame, even at the fountain-head of happiness and honor.—For how could the tongue, habituated to *profaneness*, taste any delight in the harmonious adorations of heaven? How could the lips, cankered with *slander*, relish the raptures of everlasting praise? Where would be the satisfaction of the *vain* beauty, or the *supercilious* grandee? Since, in the temple of the skies, no incense of flattery would be addressed to the former; nor any obsequious homage paid to the latter.—The spotless and inconceivable purity of the blessed God, would *flash* confusion on the lascivious eye. The envious mind, must be on a *rack* of self-tormenting *passions;* to observe millions of happy beings, shining in all the perfections of glory, and solacing themselves in the fulness of joy.—In short; the unsanctified soul, amidst holy and triumphant spirits; even in the refined regions of bliss and immortality; would be like this melancholy bird, *dislodged* from her darksome retirement, and *imprisoned* under the beams of day.

The voice of this creature screaming at our windows, or of the raven croaking over our houses, is, they say, a *token* of approaching *death*. There are persons, who would regard such an incident, with no small degree of solicitude. Trivial as it is; it would damp their spirits perhaps, break their rest.—[illegible] cannot but wonder, that people shoul suffer themse[illegible] be affrighted at such *fantastical*, and yet be quite un[illegible]ected with *real*, presages of their dissolution, Real presages of this awful event, address us from every quarter. What are these *incumbent glooms*, which overwhelm the world, but a kind of *pall* provided for nature;

and an image of that long night, which will quickly cover the inhabitants of the whole earth? What an affinity has the sleep,* which will very soon weigh down my drowsy eye-lids, with that state of intire cessation, in which all my senses must be laid aside! The silent chamber, and the bed of slumber, are a very significant representation of the land, where all things are hushed; all things are forgotten. —What meant that deep *death-bell note*, which the other evening, saddened the air? Laden with heaviest accents, it struck our ears, and seemed to knock at the door of our hearts. Surely, it brought a message to surviving mortals, and thus the tidings ran: " mortals, the destroyer of your " race is on his way. The last enemy has begun the pur- " suit; and is gaining ground upon you, every moment. " His paths are strewed with heaps of slain. Even now, " his javelin has laid one of your neighbours in the dust; " and will soon, very soon, aim the *inevitable blow* at each " of your lives."

We need not go down to the charnel-house, nor carry our search into the repositories of the dead; in order to find memorials of our impending doom. A multitude of these remembrancers are planted in all our paths, and point the heedless passengers to their long home. I can hardly enter a considerable town, but I meet the funeral procession, or the mourners going about the streets. The *hatchment* suspended on the wall, or the *crape* streaming in the air, are silent intimations; that both *rich* and *poor* have been emptying their houses, and replenishing their sepulchres. I can scarce join in any conversation, but mention is made of some that are given over by the physician, and hovering on the confines of eternity; of others, that have just dropt their clay amidst weeping friends, and are gone to appear before the Judge of all the earth. There's not a *news-paper* comes to my hand; but amidst all its enter-

* O drowsy sleep, how very near akin
To the great sleep of death.

taining narrations, reads several serious *lectures of mortality*. What else are the repeated accounts—of age, worn out by slow-consuming sicknesses—of youth, dashed to pieces by some sudden stroke of casualty—of patriots, exchanging their seats in the senate, for a lodging in the tomb—of misers, resigning their breath, and (O relentless destiny!) leaving their very riches for others? Even the vehicles of our amusement, are registers of the deceased; and the voice of *fame* seldom sounds, but in concert with a *knell*.

THESE monitors croud every place; not so much as the scenes of our diversion excepted. What are the decorations of our public buildings, and the most elegant furniture of our parlours; but the imagery of death, and trophies of the tomb? That marble bust; and those gilded pictures; how solemnly they *recognize* the fate of others, and speakingly *remind* us of our own!—I see, I hear, and O! I feel this great truth. It is interwoven with my constitution. The frequent decays of the structure foretel its final ruin. What are all the pains, that have been darted through my limbs; what every disease, that has assaulted my health; but the *advanced guards* of the foe? What are the languors and weariness, that attend the labours of each revolving day; but the more *secret practices* of the adversary, slowly undermining the earthly tabernacle?

AMIDST so many notices, shall we go on thoughtless and unconcerned? Can none of the prognostics, which are sure as oracles, awaken our attention, and engage our circumspection? *Noah*, 'tis written, *being warned of GOD, prepared an ark*. Imitate, my soul, imitate this excellent example. Admonished by such a cloud of witnesses, be continually putting thyself in a readiness for the last change. Let not that day, of which thou hast so many infallible signs, come upon thee unawares.—Get the *ivy untwined*, and thy affections disentangled from this inchanting world; that thou may'st be able to quit it, without reluctance. Get the dreadful *hand-writing cancelled*, and all thy sins blotted out; that thou may'st depart in peace, and have nothing to fear at the decisive tribunal. Get, O! get thyself interested in the Redeemer's *merits*, and transformed into his sacred *image*, then, shalt thou be meet for the inhe-

ritance of saints in light, and may'st even desire to be dissolved, and to be with CHRIST.——SOMETIEMS, in my evening walk, I have heard

——The wakeful bird
Sing darkling, and, in shadiest covert hid,
Tune her nocturnal note.*

How different the *airs of* this charming songster, from those harsh and boding *outcries!* The little creature ran through all the variations of music; and shewed herself mistress of every grace, which constitutes or embellishes harmony.—Sometimes, she swells a manly throat, and her song kindles into ardor. The tone is so *bold,* and strikes with such energy, you would imagine the sprightly serenader in the very next thicket. Anon, the strain *languishes,* and the mournful warbler melts into tenderness. The melancholy notes just steal upon the shades, and faintly touch your ear; or in foft and sadly-pleasing accents, they seem to die along the distant vale. Silence is pleased, and night listens to the trilling tale.

WHAT an invitation is this, to slip away from the thronged city! This coy and modest minstrel, entertains only the *lovers* of *retirement.* Those, who are carousing over their bowls, or ranting at the riotous club, lose this feast of harmony.—In like manner, the pleasures of religion, and the joy of reconciliation with GOD; the satisfactions arising, from an established interest in CHRIST, and from the prospect of a blissful immortality; these are all lost to the mind, that is ever *in the croud;* and dares not, or delights not, to retire into itself.—Are we charmed with the nightingale's song? Do we wish to have it nearer, and hear it oftener? Let us seek a renewed heart, and a resigned will; a conscience that whispers peace, and passions that are tuned by grace. Then, shall we never want a melody in our own breasts, far more *musically pleasing,* than sweet *Philomela's* sweetest strains.

* MILT. Par. Lost, B. III. l. 38.

As different as the voices of these birds, are the *circumstances* of those few persons, who continue awake.—Some are squandering, pearls shall I say, or kingdoms? no; but what is unspeakably more precious, time. Squandering this inestimable talent, with the most senseless and wanton prodigality. Not content with allowing a few *spare minutes*, for the purpose of necessary recreation; they lavish many hours, devote *whole nights*, to that idle diversion of shuffling, ranging, and detaching a set of painted pasteboards.—Others, instead of this busy trifling, act the part of their own tormentors. They even piquet themselves,* and call it amusement; they are torn by wild horses, yet term it a sport. What else is the *gamester's* practice? His mind is stretched on the tenter-hooks of anxious suspense, and agitated by the fiercest extremes of hope and fear? While the dice are rattling, his heart is throbbing; his fortune is tottering; and, possibly, at the very next throw, the one sinks in the gulph of ruin, the other is hurried into the rage of distraction.

Some, snatched from the bloom of health, and the lap of plenty, are confined to the *chamber* of *sickness*. Where they are constrained, either to plunge into the everlasting world, in an unprepared condition; or else (sad alternative!) to think over all the follies of a heedless life, and all the bitterness of approaching death. The disease rages; it baffles the force of medicine; and urges the reluctant wretch, to the brink of the precipice. While furies rouse the conscience, and point at the bottomless pit below.—Perhaps, his *drooping mother*, deprived long ago of the husband of her bosom, and bereft of all her other offspring; is, even now, receiving the blow which consummates her calamities.† In vain, she tries to asswage the sorrows of a

* Alluding to a very painful punishment, inflicted on delinquents among the soldiery.

† [illegible]ngs to my mind one of the deepest *mourning-pieces*, extant in the productions of [illegible] The sacred historian paints it, in all the simplicity of stile, yet with all the a[illegible] of colouring.—"When Jesus came nigh to the gate of the city, behold! there w[illegible] dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow." What [illegible]radation is here! How pathetically beautiful! every fresh circumstance, widens the

beloved son; in vain she attempts, with her tender offices, to prolong a life, dearer than her own. He faints in her arms; he bows his head he sinks in Death. Fatal, doubly fatal, that last expiring pang! while it dislodges the unwilling soul, it rends an *only child*, from the yearning embraces of a parent; and tears away the support of age, from a disconsolate widow.

While *those* long for a reprieve; *others* invite the stroke. Quite weary of the world, with a restless impatience, they sigh for dissolution. Some, pining away under the tedious decays of an incurable *consumption;* or gasping for breath, and almost suffocated, by an inundation of *dropsical* waters. On some a relentless *cancer* has fastened its envenomed teeth; and is gnawing them, though in the midst of bodily vigour, in the midst of pitying friends, gradually to death. Others are on a rack of agonies, by convulsive fits of the *stone.* O! how the pain writhes their limbs; how the sweat bedews their flesh; and their eye-balls wildly roll! Methinks, the night condoles with these her distressed children; and sheds dewy tears, over their sorrowful abodes. But of all mortals, *they* are the most exquisitely miserable, who groan beneath the pressure of a *melancholy* mind; or smart under the lashes of a *resentful* conscience. Though robed in ermine; or covered with jewels; the state of a slave chained to the gallies, or of an exile condemned to the mines, is a perfect paradise compared with theirs.

O! that the *votaries of mirth;* whose life is a continued round of meriment and whim; would bestow one serious reflection, on this *variety* of human *woes!* it might teach them to be less enamoured, with the few languid sweets; that are thinly scattered through this vale of tears, and en-

wound; aggravates the calamity; till the description is worked up into the most finished picture of exquisite and inconsolable distress. He was a *young man:* cut off in the flower of life, amidst a thousand gay expectations, and smiling hopes. A son; an *only* son; the afflicted mother's all. So that none remained to preserve the name, or perpetuate the family. What rendered the case still more deplorable, *she was a widow:* left intirely desolate; abandoned to her woes; without any to share her sorrows, or to comfort her under the irreparable loss.——Is not this a fine sketch of the *impassioned* and *picturesque?* Who can consider the narrative, with any attention; and not feel his heart penetrated, with a tender commiseration? *Luke* vii. 12.

vironed with such a multitude of ragged thorns. It might teach them, no longer to dance away their years, with a giddy *rambling impulse*; but to aspire with a determined aim, after those happy regions, where delights, abundant and unembittered, flow.

CAN there be circumstances, which a man of wisdom would more earnestly deprecate, than these several instances of grievous tribulation? there are; and, what is very astonishing, they are frequently the desire and the choice of those, who fancy themselves the sole heirs of happiness. Those I mean, who are launching out into the depths of *extravagance*, and running excessive lengths of *riot:* who are prostituting their reputation, and sacrificing their peace, to the gratification of their lusts; sapping the foundation of their health, in debaucheries; or shipwrecking the interests of their families, in their bowls. And what is worse, are forfeiting the joys of an eternal heaven, for the *sordid* satisfactions of the beast; for the *transitory* sensations of an hour.—Ye slaves of appetite, how far am I from envying your gross sensualities, and voluptuous revels! Little, ah! little are you sensible; that, while indulgence showers her roses, and luxury diffuses her odours; they scatter *poisons* also, and shed unheeded *bane*.* Evils, incomparably more malignant, than the wormwood and gall of the sharpest affliction.—Since death is in the drunkard's cup; and worse than poinards in the harlot's embrace; may it ever be the privilege of the man whom I love, to go without his share of these *pestilent sweets!*†

ABUNDANCE of living sparks glitter in the lanes, and twinkle under the hedges. I suppose, they are the *glow-worms;* which have lighted their little lamps, and obtained leave, through the absence of the sun, to play a feeble

* Yes; in the flow'rs that wreathe the sparkling bowl,
Fell adders hiss, and pois'nous serpents roll.

† *Quam suave est suavitatibus istis carere!* was St *Augustine's* pious exclamation. The substance of which Mr. *Pope* has expressed, with more simplicity, and with no less dignity.

Count all th' advantage prosp'rous vice attains,
'Tis but what virtue flies from, and disdains.

beam. A faint glimmer, just serves to render them perceivable; without tending at all to dissipate the shades, or making any amends for the departed day.—Should some weather-beaten traveller, dropping with wet, and shivering with cold, hover round this *mimicry* of *fire*; in order to dry his garments, and warm his benumbed limbs. Should some bewildered traveller; groping for his way, in a starless night and trackless desart; take one of these *languid tapers*, as a light to his feet, and a lantern to his paths. How certainly would both the one, and the other, be frustrated of their expectation!—And are *they* more likely to succeed, who, neglecting that sovereign balm, which distilled from the cross; apply any *carnal* diversion, to heal the anxiety of the mind? who, deaf to the infalilble decisions of revelation; resign themselves over to the erroneous *canjcetures* of *reason*, in order to find the way that leadeth unto life? or lastly who have recourse to the *froth* of this vain world, for a satisfactory portion, and a substantial happiness? their condnct is in no degree wiser; their disappointment equaly sure; and their miscarrage infinitely more disastrous. To speak in the delicate language of a sacred writer, " they sow the wind, and will reap the whirlwind."*

To speak more planly; the pleasures of the world, which we are *all* so prone to dote upon; and the powers of fallen reason, which *some* are apt to idolize; are not only vain, but treacherous. Not only a *painted flame*, like these sparkling animals; but much like those unctuous exhalations, which arise from the marshy ground, and often dance before the eyes of the benighted way-faring man. Kindled into a sort of fire, they personate a guide, and seem to offer their service: but, blazing with *delusive light*, mislead their follower into hidden pits, headlong precipices, and unfathomable gulfs. Where, far from his beloved friends, far from all hopes of succour, the unhappy wanderer is swallowed up, and lost.

Not long ago, we observed a very surprizing appearence in the western sky. A *prodigious star* took its flaming

* Hos. viii. 7.

route through those coasts; and trailed, as it passed, a tremendous length of fire, almost over half the heavens. Some I imagine, viewed the portentous stranger, with much the same anxious amazement; as *Belshazzar* beheld the hand-writing upon the wall. Some looked upon it as a *bloody flag;* hung out by divine resentment, over a guilty world. Some read, in its glaring visage, the fate of nations, and the fall of kingdoms. To others, it shook, or seemed to shake, *pestilence* and *war* from its horrid hair.—For my part; I am not so superstitious as to regard, what every astrologer has to prognosticate; upon the accession of a *comet*, or the projection of its huge *vapoury train.* Nothing can be more precarious, and unjustifiable, than to draw such conclusions from such events: since they neither are preternatural effects, nor do they throw the frame of things into any disorder. I would rather adore that omnipotent Being, who rolled those stupendous orbs from his creating hand; and leads them, by his providential eye, through unmeasurable tracts of Æther. Who bids them, now, approach the sun, and glow with unsufferable ardors; now, retreat to the utmost bounds of our planetary system, and make their entry among other worlds.

THEY are harmless visitants. I acquit them from the charge of causing, or being accessary to, desolating plauges. Would to GOD, there were no other more formidable Indications, of *approaching judgments*, or *impending ruin!* But, alas! when vice becomes predominant, and irreligion almost epidemical: when the sabbaths of a jealous GOD, are notoriously profaned; and that "name, which is great, wonderful, and holly," is prostituted to the meanest, or abused to to the most execrable purposes: when the worship of our great Creator and Preserver is banished, from many of the most *conspicuous families;* and it is deemed a peice of rude impertinence, so much as to mention the gracious Redeemer, in our *genteel interviews:* when it passes for an elegant freedom of behaviour, to ridicule the mysteries of christianity; and a species of refined conversation, to taint the air with la[illegible]us hints: when those, who sit in the *scorner's chair,* [illegible] with a high hand: and many of those, who wear the *Professor's garb*, are destitute of the power, and content

themselves with the mere form of Godliness: when such is the state of a community, there is reason, too apparent reason, to be horribly afraid. Such *phænomena*, abounding in the moral world, are not fanciful, but real omens. Will not an injured God "be avenged on such a nation as this?" will he not be provoked, to "sweep it with the besom of destruction?"

O! THAT the inhabitants of *Great Britain*, would lay these alarming considerations to heart! the LORD of Hosts has commanded the sword of *civil discord*, to return into its sheath. But have we returned, every one from his *evil ways?* are we become a renewed people; devoted to a dying Saviour; and zealous of good works?—What mean those peals of sobs, which burst from the *expiring cattle?* what mean those melancholy moans, where the lusty droves were wont to low?* what mean those arrows of untimely death, discharged on our innocent and useful animals?

No wantonness or sloth, has vitiated the blood of these laborious, temperate creatures. They have contracted no disease, from unseasonable indulgencies, and inordinate revelings. The pure stream is their drink; the simple herb their repast. Neither care disturbs their sleep, nor passion inflames their breast. Whence then are they visited with such terrible disorders, as no prudence can prevent, nor any medicines heal?—Surely, these calamities are the weapons of divine displeasure, and manifest chastisements of an evil generation.† Surely GOD, the "GOD to whom vengeance belongeth," has still a controversy with our sinful land. And who can tell, where the visitation will end? What a

* If these papers should be so happy as to outlive their author; perhaps, it may be needful to inform posterity, that the above-mentioned hints, allude to a most terrible, contagious, and mortal distemper; raging among the horned cattle, in various parts of the kingdom.

† The thriven calves in meads their food forsake,
And render their sweet souls before the plenteous rack.
The rivers and their banks, and hills around,
With low'ring and with dying bleats resound.

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storm may follow these prelusive drops?—O! that we may "hear the rod, and who hath appointed it!" Taught by these *penal effects* of our disobedience, may we remove the *accursed thing*,‡ from our tents; our practices; our hearts! May we turn from all ungodliness, before wrath come upon us to to the uttermost; before iniquity prove our ruin!

Sometimes, at this hour, another most remarkable sight amuses the curious, and alarms the vulgar. A blaze of lambent meteors is kindled, or some very extraordinary *lights* are refracted, *in the* quarters of the *North*.—The streamers of radiance, like legions rushing to the engagement, meet and mingle; insomuch, that the air seems to be all conflicting fire. Within a while they start from one another; and, like legions in precipitate flight, sweep, each a separate way, through the firmament. Now they are quiescent; anon, they are thrown into a quivering motion; presently, the whole horizon is illuminated with the glancing flames. Sometimes, with an aspect *awfully ludicrous*, they represent extravagant and antic vagaries. At other times, you would suspect, that some invisible hand was playing off the dumb *artillery* of the *skies*, and, by a strange expedient, giving us the flash, without the roar.

The villagers gaze at the spectacle, first with wonder, then with horror. A general *panic* seizes the country.—Every heart throbs, and every face is pale. The crouds that flock together, instead of diminishing, increase the dread. They catch contagion, from each other's looks and words; while fear is in every eye, and every tongue speaks the language of terror. Some see *hideous shapes*; armies mixing in fierce encounter, or fields swimming with blood. Some foresee *direful events*; states overthrown, or mighty monarchs tottering on their thrones. Others, sacred with still more frightful apprehensions, think of nothing but the *day* of *doom*. "Sure, says one, the unalterable hour is "struck, and the end of all things come.—See, replies another, how the blasted stars look wan! Are not these

‡ Josh. vi. 18.

" the signs of the Son of Man, coming in the clouds of " heaven?—JESUS prepare us (cries a third, and lifts his " eyes in devotion) for the archangel's trump, and the great " tribunal!"

IF this *waving brightness*, which plays innocently over our heads, be so amazing to multitudes; what inexpressible consternation must overwhelm unthinking mortals, when the *general conflagration* commences! The day, the dreadful day, is approaching; " in the which the heavens " shall pass away with a great noise,* and the elements " shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and all the " works that are therein, shall be burnt up." That mighty hand, which once opened the windows from on high, and broke up the fountains of the great deep, will then unlock all the *magazines* of *fire*, and pour a *second deluge* upon the earth. The vengeful flames, kindled by the breath of the Almighty, spread themselves from the centre to the circumference. Nothing can withstand their impetuosity; nothing can escape their rage. Universal desolation attends their progress. Magnificent palaces, and solemn temples, are laid in ashes. Spacious cities, and impregnable towers, are mingled in one smoaking mass. Not only the productions of *human art*, but the works of *Almighty power*, are fuel for the devouring element. The everlasting mountains melt, like the snows which cover their summit. Even vast oceans, serve only to augment the inconceivable rapidity and fury of the blaze.—O! how shall I,

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2 *Pet.* iii. 10. I have often thought this verse an eminent instance of that kind of beautiful writing, in which the very *sound* bears a sort of *significancy;* at least carries an exact correspondence with the sense. The original expression is one of the hoarset and deepest words in language. Nothing could be more exquisitely adapted to affect the *ear*, as well as impress the *imagination*, with the wreck of nature, and the crash of a falling world—I scarce ever read this clause, but it brings to my mind that admired description in Milton.

——— On a sudden open fly,
With impetuous recoil, and *jarring sound*,
Th' infernal doors, and on their hinges *grate*
Harsh thunder.———B. II. l. 879.

It is a pleasing employ, and a very laudable office of true criticism, to point out these inferior recommendations of the *sacred classics*. Though, I believe, the inspired writers themselves, amidst all the elevation and magnificence of their divine ideas, disdained a scrupulous attention to such *little niceties* of stile.

or others, stand undismayed amidst the glare of a *burning world;* unless the LORD JEHOVAH be our defence? How shall we be upheld in security, when the globe itself is sinking in a *fiery ruin;* unless the rock of ages be our support?

BEHOLD! a new spectacle of wonder! The *moon* is making her entry on the eastern sky. See her rising in clouded majesty! opening as it were, and asserting her original commission, to *rule over the night.* All grand and stately, but somewhat sullied is her aspect. However, she *brightens,* as she *advances;* and grows clearer, as she climbs higher, Till, at length, her silver loses all its dross; she unveils her peerless light; and becomes "the beauty of "heaven, the glory of the stars;"* delighting every eye, and chearing the whole world, with the brightness of her appearance, and the softness of her splendors.—O! thou queen of the shades! may it be my ambition, to follow this thy instructive example! While others are fond to transcribe the fashions of little courts, and to mimic personages of inferior state; be it mine, to imitate thy *improving purity!* May my conduct become more unblemished, and my temper more refined; as I proceed farther and farther, in my probationary course! May every sordid desire wear away, and every irregular appetite be gradually lost; as I make nearer approaches, to the celestial mansions!—Will not this be a comfortable evidence, that I too shall shine, in my adored Redeemer's kingdom? shine, with a *richer* lustre, than that which radiates from thy resplendent orb: shine, with an *unfading* lustre, when every ray, that beams from thy beauteous sphere, is totally extinguished?

THE day afforded us a variety of entertaining sights. These were all withdrawn, at the accession of darkness. The stars, kindly officious, immediately lent us their aid. This served to *alleviate* the frown of night; rather than to *recover* the objects from their obscurity. A faint ray,

* Ecclus xliii. 9.

· The lucid glory of the heavens.——Hor

scarcely reflected, and not from the intire surface of things, gave the straining eye a very imperfect glimpse; such as rather mocked, than satisfied vision.—Now the moon is risen, and has collected all her beams, the veil is taken off from the countenance of nature. I see the recumbent flocks; I see the green hedge-rows, though without the feathered choristers, hopping from spray to spray. In short, I see once again the world's great picture: not indeed in its late lively colours, but more *delicately shaded*, and arrayed in *softer charms*.*

WHAT a *majestic scene* is here! Incomparably grand, and exquisitely fine!—The moon, like an immense crystal lamp, pendent in the magnificent ceiling of the heavens. The stars, like so many thousands of golden tapers, fixed in their azure sockets. All pouring their lustre on spacious cities, and lofty mountains; glittering on the ocean; gleaming on the forest; and opening a prospect, wide as the eye can glance, more various than fancy can paint.†

WE are forward to admire the performance of human art A landscape, elgantly designed, and executed with a masterly hand; a piece of statuary, which seems amidst all the recommendations of exact proportion, and graceful attitude,

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* ——— Now reigns
Full orb'd the moon, and with more pleasing light
Shadowy sets off the face of things.———

MILT.

† As when the moon, refulgent lamp of night,
O'er heav'ns clear azure spreads her sacred light;
When not a breath disturbs the deep serene,
And not a cloud o'ercasts the solemn scene:
Around her throne the vivid planets roll,
And stars unnumber'd gild the glowing pole;
O'er the dark trees a yellower verdure shed,
And tip with silver ev'ry mountain's head,
Then shine the vales, the rocks in prospect rise;
A flood of glory bursts from all the skies,
The conscious swains, rejoicing in the sight,
Eye the blue vault, and bless the useful light.

ILIAD VIII.

I transcribe these lines, because Mr. *Pope* says, they exhibit, in the original, the finest *night-piece* in poetry. And, if they are so beautiful in *Homer's* language; who can suspect their suffering any disadvantage, from the pen of his admirable *translator*?

to soften into flesh, and almost breathe with life; these little *imitations* of nature, we behold with a pleasing surprise. And shall we be less affected, less delighted, with the inexpressibly noble, and completely finished *original!*—The ample dimensions of *Ranelagh's* dome; the gay illuminations of *Vaux-Hall* grove; I should scorn to mention on such an occasion, were they not the objects of general admiration. Shall we be charmed with those puny essays of finite ingenuity; and touched with no transport, at this stupendous display of omnipotent skill? at the august grandeur, and shining stateliness, of the firmament? which forms an alcove for ten thousand worlds, and is ornamented with myriads of everlasting luminaries.—Surely, this must betray, not only a total *want* of *religion;* but the most abject littleness of mind, and the utmost *poverty* of *genius.*

The Moon, is not barely, " an *ornament* in the high places of the Lord;"* but of signal *service* to the inhabitants of the earth.—How uncomfortable is deep, pitchy, total darkness! especially, in the long absence of the winter's sun. Welcome, therefore, thrice welcome, this auspicious gift of Providence; to enliven the nocturnal gloom, and line with silver the raven-coloured mantle of night!—How desirable to have our summer-evenings illuminated! that we may be able to tread the dewy meads, and breathe the delicious fragrance of our gardens; especialy, when the sultry heats render it irksome and fatiguing, to walk abroad by day.—How chearing to the *shepherd,* the use of this universal lantern; as he tends his fleecy charge, or late consigns them to their hurdled cots! how comfortable and how advantageous to the *mariner,* as he ploughs the midnight main; to adjust the tackling, to explore his way, and, under the influence of this beaming sconce, to avoid the fatal rock!—For these, and other beneficial purposes, the hand of the Almighty has hung the *stately branch* on high; and filled it with a splendor, not confined to a single edifice, or commensurate to a particular square, but diffusive as the whole extent of the hemisphere.

* Ecclus xliii. 9.

The most faithful of our inferior servants, are sometimes tardy in their office; sometimes negligent of their duty. But this celestial attendant is most *exactly punctual*, at all the stated periods of her ministration. If we choose to prolong our journey after the sun is gone down; the moon, during her whole *increase*, is always ready to act in the capacity of a guide. If we are inclined to set out very early in the morning; the moon, in her *decrease*, prevents the dawn, on purpose to offer her assistance. And, because it is so pleasant a thing, for the eyes to behold the light; the moon, at her *full*, by a course of unintermitted waiting, gives us, as it were, a double day.—How apparently has the Divine Wisdom interested itself, in providing even for the *pleasurable accommodation* of man! How desirous, that he should want no piece of commodious furniture; no kind of delightful convenience! And, in prosecution of these benevolent intentions, has annexed so valuable an appendage to the terrestrial globe.—Justly, therefore, does the psalmist celebrate that admirable constitution, which ordained *the moon and the stars to govern the night*, as an instance of rich goodness *and of mercy which endureth for ever*.*

The moon, it is confessed, is *no luminous* body. All the brightness, which beautifies her countenance, is originally in the sun, and no more than transmissively in her. That glorious orb is the parent of day, and the palace of light. From thence, the morning star gilds her horn;† from thence, the planetary circles are crowned with lustre; and from thence, the moon derives all her silver radiance.—It is pleasing to reflect, that such is the case with the *all-sufficient Redeemer*, and his *dependent people*. We are replenished from his fulness. What do we possess, which we have not received; and what can we desire, which we

* Psal. cxxxvi. 9.

† I might, to justify this expression, observe, that the planet *Venus*, commonly called the morning-star, is found, by our telescopes, frequently to appear *horned*; or to have a crescent of light, somewhat like the moon, a little before or after her conjunction. But this would be a remark, too deep and refined for my scheme; which proceeds only upon a *superficial* knowledge, and the most *obvious* appearances, of nature.

may not expect; from that never-failing Source of all Good? He is the author of our faith, and the former of our graces. In his unspotted life, we see the path; in his meritorious death, the price; and in his triumphant resurrection, the proof of bliss and immortality. If we offend, and fall seven times a day; he is the LORD our *peace*.* If we are depraved, and our best deeds very unworthy; he is the Lord our *righteousness*.† If we are blind, and even brutish, in heavenly knowledge; he is the LORD our *wisdom*:‡ his word dispels the shades; his spirit scatters the intellectual gloom; his eye looks our darkness into day.— In short, we are nothing, and "CHRIST is all." Worse than defective in ourselves, "we are *complete* in him." So that if we shine, it is with delegated rays, and with borrowed light. We act by a strength, and glory in merits, not our own. O! may we be thoroughly sensible of our dependence on the Saviour? may we constantly imbibe his propitious beams; and never, by indulging *unbelief*, or backsliding into *folly*, withdraw our souls from his benign influences! lest we lose our comfort, and our holiness; as the fair ruler of the night loses her splendor, when her urn is turned from its fountain,§ and receives no more communications of solar effulgence.

THE moon is incessantly *varying*, either in her aspect, or her stages.—Sometimes, she looks full upon us, and her visage is all lustre. Sometimes she appears in profile, and shews us only half her enlightend face. Anon, a radiant crescent but just adorns her brow. Soon, it dwindles into a slender streak. Till, at length, all her beauty vanishes, and she becomes a beamless orb.—Sometimes, she rises with the *descending day*; and begins her procesion, amidst admiring multitudes. Ere long, she defers her progress

* Judg. vi. 23. † Jer. xxiii. 6. ‡ 1 Cor. i. 30.

§ Alluding to those truly poetical lines in *Milton*,

Hither, as to their fountain, other stars
Repairing, in their golden urns draw light.

Par. Lost, B. VII. l. 364.

till the *midnight watches;* and steals unobserved, upon the sleeping world.—Sometimes, she just enters the edges of the western *horizon,* and drops us a ceremonious visit. Within a while, she sets out on her nightly tour, from the opposite regions of the east; traverses the whole *hemisphere;* and never offers to withdraw, till the more refulgent partner of her sway renders her presence unnecessary.—In a word; she is, while conversant among us, still waxing or waning, and "never continueth in one stay."

SUCH is the moon; and such are all *sublunary things;* exposed to perpetual vicissitudes.—How often, and how soon, have the faint echoes of *renown* slept in silence, or been converted into the clamours of obloquy! the same lips, almost with the same breath, cry Hosanna, and Crucify.—Have not *riches* confessed their notorious treachery, a thousand and a thousand times? either melting away, like snow in our hands, by insensible degrees; or escaping, like a winged prisoner from its cage, with a precipitate flight.—Have we not known the bridesgroom's *closet,* an antechamber to the *tomb;* and heard the voice, which so lately pronounced the sparkling pair husband and wife, proclaim an everlasting divorce; and seal the decree with that solemn asseveration, "ashes to ashes, dust to dust?"—Our *friends,* though the medicine of life; our *health,* though the balm of nature; are a most precarious possession. How soon may the first become a corpse in our arms; and how easily is the last destroyed in its vigour?—You have seen, no doubt, a set of pretty *painted birds,* perching on your trees, or sporting in your meadows. You was pleased with the lovely visitants, that brought beauty on their wings, and melody in their throats. But could you insure the *continuance* of this agreable entertainment? no, truly. At the least disturbing noise, at the least terrifying appearence, they start from their seats; they mount the skies; and are gone in an instant, are gone for ever. Would you choose to have a happiness, which bears date with their arrival, and expires at their departure? if you could not be content with a portion, enjoyable only through such a *fortuitous term,* not of years, but of moments,

O! take up with nothing earthly; set your affections on things above; there alone is "no variableness or shadow of "turning"

JOB, is not a more illustrious pattern of patience, than an eminent exemplification of this remark.—View him in his *private estate*. He heaps up silver as the dust; he washes his steps in butter, and the rock pours him out rivers of oil. View him in his *public character*. Princes revere his dignity; the aged listen to his wisdom; every eye beholds him with delight; every tongue loads him with blessings.—View him in his *domestic circumstances*. On one hand, he is defended by a troop of sons; on the other, adorned with a train of daughters; and on all sides, surrounded by "a very great household."—Never was human felicity so consumate; never was *disastrous revolution* so sudden. The lightning, which consumed his cattle, was not more terrible, and scarce more instantaneous. The joyful parent is bereft of his offspring, and his "children are buried in Death." The man of affluence is stript of his abundance; and he who was cloathed in scarlet, embraces the dung-hill. The venerable patriarch is the derision of scoundrels; and the late darling of an indulgent Providence, is become "a brother to dragons, a "companion of owls."—Nor need we go back to former ages, for proofs of this afflicting truth. In our times; in all times; the wheel continues the same incessant whirl. And frequently those, who are triumphing, to day, in the highest *elevations* of joy; to-morrow are bemoaning the instability of mortal affairs, in the very *depths* of misery.—Amidst so much fluctuation and uncertainty; how wretched is the condition, which has no anchor of the soul, sure and stedfast. May thy loving kindness, O God, be our present treasure; and thy future glory, our reversionary inheritance! Then shall our happiness, not be like the full-orbed moon, which is "a light that *decreaseth* in its perfection;' but like the sun, when he goeth forth in his strength, and knoweth, no other change, but that of *shining more* and more unto the perfect day.

METHINKS, in this ever-varying sphere, I see a representation, not only of our temporal advantages, but also of our *spiritual accomplishments*. Such, I am sure, is what

the kind partiality of a friend would call *my righteousness*: and such, I am apt to suspect, is the righteousness of every man living. Now we exercise it, in some few instances; in some little degrees. Anon, sin revives, and leads our souls into a transient, though unwilling captivity. Now we are *meek*; but soon a ruffling accident intervenes, and turns our composure into a fretful disquietude. Now we are *humble*; soon we reflect upon some inconsiderable or imaginary superiority over others, and a sudden elatement swells our minds. Now, perhaps, we possess a clean heart, and are warm with holy love. But O! how easily is the purity of our affections sullied; how soon the fervour of our gratitude cooled! And is there not something amiss, even in our best moments? Something to be *ashamed* of, in all we *are*; something to be *repented* of in all we *do*?

With what gladness, therefore, and adoring thankfulness, should we "submit to the righteousness of our incar-" nate God;" and *receive*, as a divine gift, what cannot be *acquired* by human works!*—A writer, of the first distinction, and nicest discernment, stiles the obedience of our glorious surety, an *everlasting righteousness*.† Such as was subject to no interruption, nor obscured by the least blemish; but proceeded always in the same uniform tenour, of the most spotless perfection.—This righteousness, in another sense, answers the prophet's exalted description; as its beneficial and sovereign efficacy knows no end; but lasts through all our life; lasts in the trying hour of death; lasts at the decisive day of judgment; lasts through every generation; and will last to all eternity.

Sometimes, I have seen that resplendent globe *stript* of her *radiance*; or, according to the emphatical language of scripture, "turned into blood." The earth, interposing with its opake body, intercepted the solar rays, and cast its own gloomy shadow on the moon. The malignant influence gained upon her sickening orb; extinguished, more and more, the feeble remainders of light; till at length, like one in a *deep swoon*, no comeliness was left in her

* Rom. v. 17.—x. 3. † Dan. ix. 24.

countenance; she was totally overspread with darkness.—At this juncture, what a multitude of eyes were gazing upon the rueful spectacle! even of those eyes, which disregarded the empress of the night; or beheld her with indifference, when robed in glory, and riding in her triumphal chariot, she shed a softer day through the nations. But now, under these circumstances of disgrace, they watch her motions with the most *prying attention*. In every place, her misfortune is the object of general observation; and the prevailing topic of discourse, in every company.

Is it not thus, with regard to *persons* of *eminence*, in their respective spheres! Kings, at the head of their subjects; nobles, surrounded with their dependents; and (after names of so much grandeur, may I be alowed to add?) ministers, labouring among their people;* are each in a cospicuous station. Their conduct in its *minutest* step, especially in any *miscarriage*, will be narrowly surveyed, and critically scanned. Can there be a louder call, to ponder the paths of their feet, and to be particularly jealous over all their ways?—Those, who move in inferior life, may grossly offend; and little alarm be given; perhaps, no notice taken. But it is not to be expected, that the least slip in their carriage, the least flaw in their character, will pass undiscovered. *Malice*, with her eagle-eyes, will be sure to discern them; while *censure*, with her shrill trumpet, will be as far from concealing them; as *calumny*, with her treacherous whispers, from extenuating them. A planet may sink below the horizon; or a star, for several months, withdraw its shining; and scarce one in ten thousand perceive the loss. But, if the moon suffers a transient eclipse, almost half the world are spectators of her dishonour.

VERY different was the case, when at this late hour, I have taken a solitary walk on the *Western cliffs*. At the foot of the steep mountain, the sea, all clear and smooth, spread itself into an immense plain, and held a watry mirror to the skies. Infinite heights above, the firmament

* Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill, cannot be hid *Matt.* v. 14.

stretched its azure expanse; bespangled with unnumbered stars, and adorned with the moon, "walking in brightness."* She seemed to contemplate herself, with a peculiar pleasure; while the *transparent surface*, both received, and returned her *silver image*. Here, instead of being covered with sack-cloth, she shone with double lustre; or rather, with a lustre multiplied, in proportion to the number of beholders, and their various situations.

Such, methinks, is the effect of an exemplary behaviour, in persons of exalted rank. Their course, as it is nobly distinguished, so it will be happily *influential*. Others will catch the diffusive ray; and be ambitious to resemble a pattern, so attracting; so commanding. Their amiable qualities, will not terminate in themselves: but we shall see them *reflected* from their families; their acquaintance; their retainers. Just as we may now behold another moon; trembling † in the stream; glittering in the canal; and displaying its lovely impress, on every collection of waters.

The moon, philosophy says, is a sort of *sovereign* over the *great deep*. Her orb, like a royal sceptre, sways the ocean, and actuates the fluid realms. It swells the tides, and perpetuates the reciprocal returns of ebb and flow. By which means, the liquid element purges off its filth; and is preserved, from being putrefied itself, and from poisoning the world.—Is the moon thus *operative* on the vast abyss? And shall not the faith of eternal and infinite delights to come, be equally efficacious on this soul of mine? Far above her argent fields, are treasures of *happiness*, unseen by mortal eye; by mortal ear unheard; and unconceived by any human imagination. In that desirable world, the most distinguished and exalted *honors* also are conferred; in comparison with which, the thrones and diadems of earthly monarchs, are empty pageants, and childish toys.

Yonder arch of sapphire, with all its spangles of gold, is but the floor of those divine abodes What then are the

* Job xxvi. 26.

† The sea trembles with her silver light.——Virg.

apartments; what is the palace? How bright with glories; how rich with bliss?

O! ye mansions of blessedness; ye beauties of my Father's kingdom; which far outshine these lamps of the visible heaven; transmit your sweet and winning invitations to my heart. *Attract* and *refine*, all my affections. Withdraw them from *stagnating*, on the sordid shores of flesh; never suffer them to settle, upon the impure lees of sense: but impress them with *emotions* of restless desire, after sublime and celestial joys.—Joys, that will charm every faculty with unimaginable pleasure; when the moon, with her waxing splendors, shall chear our sight no more.

Enough for the present evening. My thoughts have been sufficiently exercised, and my steps begin to be attended with weariness. Let me obey the admonition of nature; and give respite to my meditations, slumber to my eyes.—But stay.—Shall I retire to the bed of sleep, with as little ceremony, and with as much inattention, as the brutes to their sordid lair? Are no *acknowledgments* due to that Divine Being, who is the support of my life, and the length of my days? Have I no farther need of his *protecting* care; no more occasion for the blessings of goodness?—*Lepidus*, perhaps, may laugh at the bended knee; and have a thousand darts of raillery, ready to discharge on the practice of devotion. The wits I know are unmercifully severe on, what *they* call, the drudgery of prayer, and the fantastical rant of praise. These they leave to the illiterate labourer, and the mean mechanic; or treat them, with a contemptuous sneer, as the parson's ignoble trade.

Is it then an instance of *superstitious* blindness, to distinguish; or of *whimsical* zeal, to celebrate; the most supereminent excellency and merit; is it an *ungraceful* business; or does it argue a *groveling* disposition; to magnify goodness, transcendently rich and diffusive?—What can be so truly becoming a *dependent state*, as to pay our adoring homage to the Author of all perfection; and profess our devoted allegiance, to the Supreme Almighty Governer of the Universe?—Can any thing more significantly bespeak an *ingenuous temper;* or administer a more real satisfaction to its finest feelings; than the excercises of penitential devotion?

by which we give vent to an honest anguish; or melt into filial sorrow; for our insensibility to the best of friends, for our disobedience to the best of parents?—In a word; can there be a more *sublime pleasure,* than to dwell, in fixed contemplation, on the beauties of the eternal mind; the amiable original of all that is fair, grand, and harmonious; the beneficent giver of all that is convenient, comfortable, and useful?—Can there be a more *advantageous employ,* than to present our requests to the Father of mercies; opening our minds to the irradiations of his wisdom, and all the faculties of our souls to the communications of his grace;—It is strange, unaccountably strange, that the notion of *dignity* in sentiment, and the pursuit of *refined* enjoyment, should ever be disunited from devotion. That persons, who make pretensions to an improved taste, and exalted genius, should neglect this most ennobling intercourse, with the wisest and best of beings; the inexaustible source of honor and joy.

Shall I be deterred, from approaching this source of the purest delight? deterred, from pursuing this highest improvement of my nature? deterred from all, by a *formidable* banter; or confuted, by one *irrefragible* smile?—No: let the moon, in her resplendent sphere; and yonder pole, with all its starry train; witness, if I be silent even or morn. If I refrain to kindle in my heart and breathe from my lips, the reasonable incense of praise. Praise to that great and glorious God, who formed the earth, and built the skies; who poured from his hand the watery world, and shed the all-surrounding air abroad.—"Thou also madest the night, Maker Omni-"nipotent! and thou, the day! which I, though less than "the least of all thy mercies, have passed in safety, tran-"quility, and comfort.—When I was lost in the extrava-"gance of dreams, or lay immersed in the insensibility of "sleep, thy hand recovered me from the temporary lethar-"gy. Thy hand set a new, a delicately fine edge, on all "my blunted *senses;* and strung my sinews with recruited "vigour. When my thoughts were benumed and stupefied, "thy quickening influence roused them into activity; when "they were disconcerted and wild, thy regulating influence "reduced them into order. Refitting me at once, to relish "the innocent entertainments of an *animal,* and to enjoy

"the sublime gratificatins of a *rational* capacity.—When "darkness covered the creation, at thy command, the *sun* "arose; painted the flowers, and distinguished every ob-"ject; gave light to my feet,and gave nature, with all her "beautiful scenes, to my eye.—To thee, O thou God of "my strength, I owe the *cotinuance* of my being, and the "*vivacity* of my constitution. By thy sacred order, without "any consciousness of mine, the wheels of life move, and "the crimson fountain plays. *Over-ruled* by thy exquisite "*skill*, it transforms itself, by the nicest operations of an "inexplicable kind of chemistry, into a variety of the finest "secretions. Which glide into the muscles, and swell them "for action; or pour themselves into the fluids, and repair "their incessant decays. Which cause chearfulness to "sparkle in the eye, and health to bloom in the cheek.

"*DISASTROUS accidents*, injurious to the peace of my "mind; or fatal to the welfare of my body; beset my paths. "But thy faithfulness and truth, like an impenetrable shield, "guarded me all around. Under this divine protection, I "walked secure, amidst legions of *apparent* perils; and "passed unhurt, through a far greater multiplicity of *unseen* "evils. Not one of my bones was broken; not a single "shaft grazed upon my ease; even when the eye that watch-"ed over me, saw, in its wide survey, *thousands falling* "*beside me*, in irrecoverable ruin; *and ten thousands* deeply "wounded, *on my right-hand*.—If sickness has, at any time, "saddened my chamber, or pain harrowed my flesh; it was "a *wholesome* discipline, and a *gracious* severity. The "chastisement proved a sovereign medicine, to cure me "of an immoderate fondness, for this imperfect trouble-"some state; and to quicken my desires, after the unim-"bittered enjoyments of my eternal home.—Has not thy "munificence, unwearied and unbounded, spread my *table*; "and furnished it, with the finest wheat; replenished it, "with marrow and fatness? While temperance sweetened "the bowl; appetite seasoned the dish; contentment and "gratitude crowned the repast.—Has not thy kindness, "O God of the families of *Israel*, preserved my affection-ate *relations*; who study, by their tender offices, to soften every care, and heighten every joy? Has not thy kind-

ness given me valuable *friends;* whose presence is a cordial, to chear me in a dejected hour; and whose conversation, mingles improvement with delight?

"WHEN sin lay disguised amidst flowery scenes of pleasure; enlightened by thy wisdom, I *discerned* the latent mischief! made resolute by thy grace, I *shunned* the luscious bane. If, through the impulse of sensuality, or the violence of passion, I have been hurried into the snare, and stung by the serpent; thy faithful admonitions, have *recalled* the foolish wanderer; while the blood of thy Son has *healed* his deadly wounds.—Some, no doubt, have been cut off in in the midst of their iniquities; and transmitted, from the thrillings of polluted joy, to the agonies of eternal despair. Whereas, I have been distinguished by long-fuffering mercy; and, instead of lifting up my eyes in torments, to behold a heaven irrecoverably lost; I may lift them up under the pleasing views of being admitted, ere long, into those abodes of endless felicity.—In the mean time, thou hast vouchsafed me the *revelation* of thy will; the influences of thy *spirit;* and abundance of the most effectual *aids,* for advancing in knowledge, and growing in godliness: for becoming more conformable to to thy image, and more meet for thy presence: for tastng the pleasures of religion, and securing the riches of eternity.

"How various is thy beneficence, O thou lover of souls! it has unsealed a thousand sources of good; opened a thousand avenues of delight; and heaped blessings upon me with a ceaseless liberality. If I should attempt to declare them; they would be more than the *starry* host, which glitter in this unclouded sky; more than the *dewy* gems, which will adorn the face of the morning.

"AND shall I *forget* the GOD of my salvation, the author of all my mercies? rather let my pulse forget to beat. Shall I render him *no* expressions of thankfulness? then might all nature reproach my ingratitude.—Shall I rest satisfied with the *bare* acknoledgement of my lips no: let my life be vocal, and speak his praise, in that only

"genuine, that most emphatical language—the language "of devout obedience. Let the *bill* be drawn upon my "very heart; let all my affections *acknowledge* the draught; "and let the whole tenour of my actions, in time and "through eternity, be continually *paying* the debt— the "ever-pleasing, ever-growing debt of duty, veneration, and "love.

"And can I, O thou guide of my goings, and guar-"dian of all my interests—can I *distrust* such signal, such "experienced goodness? *thou hast been my helper*, thro' all "the busy scenes of day: *therefore, under the shadow of* "*thy wings* will I repose myself, during the darkness, the "the danger, and deathlike inactivity of the night. What-"ever defilement I have contracted, wash it thoroughly "away, in redeeming blood; and let neither the sinful "stain, nor the sinful inclination, accompany me to my "couch!—Then, shall *I lay me down in peace, and take my* "*rest;* chearfully referring it to thy all-wise determination, "whether I shall open my eyes in *this* world, or awake in the "unknown regions of *another*."



Contemplations
ON THE STARRY HEAVENS.

There dwells a *noble Pathos* in the skies,
Which warms our passions, proselytes our hearts.
How *eloquently shines* the glowing pole!
With what authority it gives its charge,
Remonstrating *great truths* in ſtile sublime!

NIGHT THOUGHTS, *No.* IX.



CONTEMPLATIONS ON THE STARRY HEAVENS.

THIS evening, I exchange the nice retreats of art, for the noble theatre of nature. Instead of measuring my steps, under the *covert* of an arbour; let me range along the *summit*, of this gently rising hill.—There is no need of the leafy shade, since the sun has quitted the horizon, and withdrawn his scorching beams. But see, how advantages and inconveniencies are usually linked, and chequer our affairs below! If the *annnoyig heat* ceases, the *landscape*, and its pleasing scenes, are also removed —The majestic castle, and the lowly cottage, are vanished together. I have lost the aspiring mountain, and its russet brow; I look round, but to no purpose, for the humble vale, and its flowery lap. The plains whitened with flocks, and the heath yellow with furze, disappear. The advancing night has wrapt in darkness the long extended forest; and drawn her mantle, over the windings of the silver stream. I no longer behold that luxuriant fertility in the fields; that wild magnificence of prospect, and endless variety of images; which have so often touched me with delight, and struck me with awe, from this commanding eminence.

The loss, however, is scarcely to be regretted; since it is amply compensated, by the opening beauties of the sky. Here I enjoy a free view of the whole hemisphere; without any obstacle from below, to confine the exploring eye; or any cloud from above, to overcast the spacious concave. 'Tis true; the lively vermilion, which so lately streaked the

chambers of the west, is all faded. But the *planets*, one after another, light up their lamps; the *stars* advance in their glittering train; a thousand and a thousand luminaries, shine forth in successive splendors; and the whole firmament is kindling into the most beautiful glow. The blueness of the æther, heightened by the season of the year, and still more enlivened by the *absence* of the *moon*, gives those gems of heaven the strongest lustre.

One pleasure more, the invading gloom has not been able to snatch, from my sense. The night rather improves, than destroys, the fragrance which exhales from the *blooming beans*. With these, the sides of the sloping declivity are lined; and with these, the balmy zephyrs perfume their wings. Does *Arabia*, from all her spicy groves breathe a more liberal, or a more charming gale of sweets? and, what is a peculiar recommendation of the rural entertainments, presented in our happy land, they are alloyed by no apprehensions of danger. No poisonous serpent, lurks under the blossom; nor any ravenous beast, lies ready to start from the thicket.—But, I wander from a far more exalted subject.—My thoughts, like my affections, are too easily diverted from the heavens, and detained by inferior objects. Away, my attention, from these little blandishments of the earth; since all the *glories* of the *sky* invite thy regard.

We have taken a turn among the *tombs*, and viewed the solemn memorials of the dead: In order to learn the vanity of mortal things, and to break their soft enchantment.—We have surveyed the *ornaments* of the *garden*; not that the heart might be planted in the parterre, or take root among the flowery race: but that these delicacies of a day, might teach us to aspire after a better paradise; where beauty never fades, and delight is ever in the bloom.—A third time we lighted the candle of meditation; and sought for wisdom, not in the crouded city, or wrangling schools, but in the silent and lonely *walks* of antient *night*.* —Let us once more indulge the contemplative vein, and raise our speculations

* Referring to the several subjects of the three preceding essays.

to those *sublimer works* of the great creator; which the regions of the sky contain, and this dusky hour unveils.†

If we have discerned the touches of his pencil, glowing in the colours of spring; if we have seen a sample of his beneficence exhibited in the stores of nature; and a ray of his brightness, beaming in the blaze of day; what an infinitely richer field for the display of his perfections, are the heavens! the *heavens*, in the most emphatical manner declare the glory of God. The heavens are nobly eloquent of the deity, and the most magnificent heralds of their maker's praise. They speak to the whole universe, for there is neither speech so *barbarous*, but their language is understood; nor nation so *distant*, but their voices are heard among them.*—Let me then, in this solemn season, formed for thought, and a calm intercourse with heaven; let me listen to their silent lectures. Perhaps, I may receive such impressive manifestations of "the eternal Power and Godhead," as may *shed religion* on my soul, while I walk the solitary shades, and may be a tutelary *friend* to my *virtue*, when the call of business, and the return of light, expose me again to the inroads of temptation.

The *Israelites*, instigated by frenzy rather than devotion, worshipped the host of heaven. And the pretenders to *judicial astrology* talk of, I know not what, mysterious efficocy; in the different aspect of the stars, or the various conjunction and opposition of the planets.—Let those, who are unacquainted with the sure word of revelation, give ear to these sons of delusion, and dealers in deceit. For my part, it is a question of indifference to me, whether the constellations shone with smiles, or loured in frowns, on the hour of my nativity. Let Christ be my *guard*; and, secure in such a protection, I would laugh at their impotent menaces. Let Christ be my *guide*, and I shall scorn

† Night opes the noblest *scenes*, and sheds an awe,
Which gives those venerable scenes full weight,
And deep reception, in th' intender'd heart.

Night Thoughts, No IX.

* Psal. xix. 3.

to ask, as well as despair of receiving, any predictory information from such senseless masses.—What! shall "the living seek to the dead?"† Can these bodies advertise me of future events, which are unconscious of their own existence? shall I have recourse to dull unintelligent matter, when I may apply to that all-wise being; who, with one comprehensive glance, distinctly views whatever is lodged in the bosom of immensity, or forming in the womb of futurity?—Never, never will I search for any intimations of my *fate;* but often trace my creator's *footsteps*, in yonder starry plains. In the former case, they would be teachers of lies; in the latter, they are oracles of truth. In this therefore, this sense only, I profess myself the pupil of the stars.

The vulgar, are apprehensive of nothing more, than a multitude of *bright spangles*, dropt over the æthereal blue. They have no higher notion of these fine appearances, than that they are so many *golden studs*, with which the empyrean arch is decorated.—But studious minds, that carry a more accurate and strict inquiry among the celestial bodies, bring back advices of a most astonishing import. Let me just recollect the most material of those *stupendous discoveries;* in order to furnish out proper subjects for contemplation. And let the unlearned remember, that the scene I am going to display, is the workmanship of that incomprehensible God, who is "perfect in knowledge, and "mighty in power." Whose name, whose nature, and all whose operations, are "great and marvellous." Who summons into being, with equal ease, a single grain, or ten thousand worlds.—To this if we continually advert, the assertions, though they will certainly excite our *admiration*, need not transcend our belief.

The earth is, in fact, a round body; however it may seem, in some parts, to be sunk into vales, and raised into hills; in other parts, to be spread into a spacious plain, extending to the confines of the heavens, or terminated by the waters of the ocean.—We may fancy, that it has deep foundations, and rests upon some prodigiously solid basis.

* Isai. viii. 19.

But it is *pendent*, in the wide transpicuous æther; without any visible cause, to uphold it from above, or support it from beneath.—It may seem to be sedentary in its attitude, and motionless in its situation. But it is continually *sailing*, thro' the depths of the sky; and in the space of twelve months, finishes the mighty voyage. Which periodical rotation, produces the seasons, and compleats the year.—As it proceeds in the annual circuit, it *spins* upon its own *centre;* and turns its sides, alternately to the fountain of light. By which means, the *day* dawns in one hemisphere; while the night succeeds in the other. Without this expedient, one part of its regions would, during half the great revolution, be scorched with excessive heat, or languish under an unintermitted glare: while the other, exposed to the contrary extremes, would be frozen to Ice, and buried under a long oppression of dismal and destructive darkness.

I CANNOT forbear taking notice; that, in this compound motion of the earth, the one never *interferes* with the other, but both are perfectly *compatible*. Is it not thus, with the precepts of religion, and the needful affairs of the present life; not excepting even the innocent gratifications of our appetites?—Some, I believe, are apt to imagine, that they must renounce society, if they devote themselves to CHRIST? and abandon all the satisfactions of *this* world, if they once become zealous candidates for the felicity of *another*.—But this is a very mistaken notion, or else a very injurious representation, of the doctrine which is according to godliness. It never was intended to drive men into desarts; but to lead them, through the peaceful and pleasant paths of wisdom, into the blissful regions of life eternal. It was never intended to strike off the wheels of business, or cut in sunder the sinews of industry; but rather, to make men industrious from a principle of *conscience*, not from the instigations of *avarice;* that so, they may promote their immortal happiness, even while they provide for their temporal maintenance. It has no design to extirpate our passions, but only to restrain their irregularities; neither would it ex

tinguish the delights of sense, but prevent them from evaporating into vanity, and subsiding into gall.—A Person may be chearful among his friends, and yet joyful in GOD. He may taste the sweets of his earthly estate; and, at the same time, cherish his hopes of a nobler inheritance in heaven. The *trader* may prosecute the demands of commerce, without neglecting to negociate the affairs of his salvation. The *warrior* may wear his sword; may draw, in a just cause, that murderous weapon; yet be a good soldier of JESUS CHRIST, and obtain the crown that fadeth not away. The *parent* may lay up a competent portion for his children, and not forfeit his title to the treasures, either of grace or of glory.—So far is christianity from obstructing any valuable interest, or with-holding any real pleasure; that it improves the one, and advances the other. Just as the diurnal and annual motions, are so far from *clashing*, that they entirely *accord;* and, instead of being destructive of each other, by mutually blending their effects, they give proportion and harmony to time, fertility and innumerable benefits to nature.

To us, who dwell on its surface, the earth is by far the *most extensive* orb; that our eyes can, any where, behold. It is also cloathed witth verdure; distinguished by trees; and adorned with a variety of beautiful decorations. Whereas, to a spectator placed on one of the planets, it wears an uniform aspect; looks all luminous, and *no larger* than a spot. To beings, who dwell at still greater distances, it entirely disappears.—That which we call, alternately the morning and the evening-star; as in one part of her orbit, she rides foremost in the procession of night; in the other, ushers in, and anticipates the dawn; is a *planetary world.* Which, with the four others, that so wonderfully vary their mystic dance, are in themselves dark bodies, and shine only by reflection: have fields, and seas, and skies of their own: are furnished with all accommodations for *animal* subsistence, and are supposed to be the abodes of *intellectual* life. All which, together with this our earthly habitation, are dependent on that grand dispenser of divine munificence, the sun; receive their light from the distribution of his rays, and derive their comforts from his benign agency.

The *sun*, which seems to perform its daily stages through the sky, is, in this respect,* *fixed* and immoveable. 'Tis the great axle of heaven, about which the globe we inhabit, and other more spacious orbs, wheel their stated courses. The sun, though seemingly *smaller* than the *dial* it illuminates, is abundantly *larger*† than this whole *earth;* on which so many lofty mountains rise, and such vast oceans roll. A line, extending from side to side, through the centre of that resplendent orb, would measure more than eight hundred thousand miles: a girdle, formed to go round its circumference, would require a length of millions: were its solid contents to be estimated, the account would overwhelm our understanding, and be almost beyond the power of language to express.‡—Are we startled at these reports of Philosophy? are we ready to cry out, in a transport of surprize? how *mighty* is the being, who kindled such a prodigious fire; and keeps alive, from age to age, such an enormous mass of flame!—Let us attend our philosophic guides, and we shall be brought acquainted with speculations, more enlarged and more amazing.

This sun, with all its attendant planets, is but a very little part of the grand machine of the universe. Every *star*, though, in appearance, no bigger than the diamond, that glitters upon a lady's ring; is really a *vast globe*, like the sun in size, and in glory; no less spacious, no less luminous, than the radiant source of our day. So that every star is, not barely a world, but the *centre* of a magnificent system; has a retinue of worlds, irradiated by its beams, and revolving round its attractive influence. All which are

* I say, *in this respect;* that I may not seem to forget, or exclude, the revolution of the sun round its own axis.

† A hundred thousand times, according to the *lowest* reckoning. Sir Isaac Newton computes the sun to be 900,000 times bigger than the earth.——*Religious Philosopher*, p. 719

‡ Dr. Derham, after having calculated the dimensions of the planets, adds; "amazing "as these masses are, they are all far outdone by that stupendous globe of light, the sun; "which as it is the fountain of light and heat, to all the planets about it, so doth it far "surpass them all in its bulk: its apparent diameter being computed at 822,148 English "miles, its ambit at 2,582,873 miles, and its solid contents at 290,971,000,000,000,000." *Astro. Theol.* Book I. Chap. II.

lost, to our sight; in unmeasurable wilds of æther.—That the stars appear like so many diminutive, and scarce distinguishable *points*, is owing to their immense and inconceivable distance. Immense and inconceivable indeed it is; since a ball, shot from the loaded cannon, and flying with unabated rapidity, must travel, at this impetuous rate, almost seven hundred thousand years,* before it could the *nearest* of those luminaries.

CAN any thing be more wonderful, than these observations? yes: there are truths, far more stupendous; there are scenes, far more extensive. As there is no end of the Almighty Maker's greatness; so no imagination can set limits to his creating hand.—Could you soar beyond the moon, and pass through all the planetary choir: could you wing your way to the highest apparent star, and take your stand on one of those loftiest pinacles of heaven: you would, there see *other skies* expanded; *another sun*, disributing his inexhaustible beams by day; *other stars* that gild the horrors of the alternate night: and *other*,* perhaps noble *systems*, established; established, in unknown profusion, through the boundless dimensions of space.—Nor does the dominion of the universal sovereign terminate *there*. Even at the end of this vast tour, you would find yourself advanced no farther, than the suburbs of creation; arrived only at the frontiers of the great JEHOVAH's kingdom.

AND do they tell me; that the sun, the moon, and all the planets, are but a little part of his works? *how great*, then, *are his signs! and how mighty are his wonders!*†—And if so, what is the CREATOR himself! how far exalted above all praise! who is so *high*; that he looks down on the highest of these dazling spheres, and sees even the summit of creation in a vale: so *great* that this prodigious extent of space, is but a point in his presence; and all this confluence of worlds, as the lightest atom that fluctuates in air, and sports in the meridian ray.

See Religious Philosopher, p. 819.

† Dan. iv. 3.

Thou most sublime and incomprehensibly glorious God, how am I overwhelmed with awe! how sunk into the lowest prostration of mind! when I consider thy "*excellent greatness*," and my own utter insignificancy!—And have I, excessively mean as I am, have I entertained any *conceited apprehensions* of myself? have I felt the least element of thought, in the presence of so majestic adorable a being? how should this wound me with sorrow, and cover me with confusion!—O my GOD, was I possessed of all the *high perfections*, which accomplish and adorn the angels of light; amidst all these noble endowments, I would fall down in the *deepest abasement* at thy feet. Lost in the infinitely superior blaze of thy uncreated glories; I would confess myself, to be nothing; to be less than nothing, and vanity.—How much more ought I to maintain the most unfeigned humiliation, before thy divine majesty; who am not only dust and ashes, but a compound of ignorance, imperfection, and depravity!

While, beholding this vast expanse, I learn my own extreme meanness; I would also discover the abject littleness of all *terrestrial things*.—What is the earth, with all her ostentatious scenes, compared with this astonishingly grand furniture of the skies? what but a dim *speck*, hardly perceivable in the map of the universe? it is observed, by a very judicious writer,* that if the sun himself, which enlightens this part of the creation was extinguished; and all the host of planetary worlds, which move about him, were annihilated; they would not be missed, by an eye that can take in the whole compass of nature, any more than a grain of sand upon the sea shore. The bulk of which they consist, and the space which they occupy, is so exceedingly little in comparison of the whole; that their loss would scarce leave a blank, in the immensity of God's works.—If then, not our globe only, but this whole system, be so very diminutive; what is a kingdom, or a country? what are a few *lordships*, or the so much admired *patrimonies* of those, who

* Spect. Vol. VIII. No. 565.

are stiled wealthy?* When I measure them with my own litttle pittance, they swell into proud and bloated dimensions. But, when I take the universe for my standard, how scanty is their size, how contemptible their figure! they shrink into *pompous nothings.*†

When the keen-eyed eagle soars above all the feathered race, and leaves their very sight below: when she wings her way, with direct ascent, up the steep of heaven; and, steadily gazing on the meridian sun, accounts its beaming splendors all her own: does she then regard, with any solicitude, the *mote* that is flying in the air, or the *dust* which she shook from her feet? And shall this eternal mind, which is capable of contemplating its Creator's glory; which is intended to enjoy the visions of his countenance; shall this *eternal mind,* endued with such great capacities, and made for such exalted ends, be so *ignobly ambitious,* as to sigh for the tinsels of state; or so *poorly covetous,* as to grasp after ample territories on a needle's point?—No: under the influence of such cosiderations I feel my sentiments expand, and my wishes acquire a turn of subiimity. My throbbing desires after worldly grandeur, die away; and I find myself, if not possesed of power, yet superior to its charms.—Too long, must I own, have my affections been pinioned by vanity, and immured in this earthly clod. But these thoughts break the *shackles.*‡ These objects open the door of *liberty.* My soul, fired by such noble prospects, weighs anchor from this little nook; and coasts no longer about its contracted shores; dotes no longer on its painted shells. The *immensity* of things, is her range; and an *infinity* of bliss, is her aim.

* It is profitable to let our imaginations rove amongst the starry hosts, it causes us to scorn this earth, and all its riches.——SEN.

† The grand inanities of this low world.——WATT's Hor. Lyr.

‡ The soul of man was made to walk the skies,
Delightful outlet of her prison here!
There disincumber'd from her chains, the ties
Of toys terrestrial, she
There freely can respire, dilate, extend,
In full proportion let loose all her powe

Night Thoughts, No. IX.

BEHOLD this immense expanse, and admire the *condescension* of thy GOD.—In this manner, an inspired and princely astronomer, improved his survey of the nocturnal heavens. *When I consider thy heavens, even the works of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained;* I am smitten with wonder at thy glory, and cry out in a transport of gratitude, *LORD, what is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the Son of Man, that thou visitest him?** " How amazing, how charming, is that divine be-" nignity, which is pleased to bow down its sacred regards, " to so foolish and worthless a creature! yea, disdains not, " from the height of infinite exaltation, to extend its " kind providential care, to our most minute concerns!—" This is amazing. But that the everlasting sovereign " should give his Son, to be made flesh, and become our " Saviour! shall I call it a *miracle* of condescending good-" ness? rather, what are all miracles, what are all mysteries, " to this ineffable gift?"

Had the *brightest archangel* been commissioned to come down, with the olive-branch of peace in his hand, signifying his eternal Maker's readiness to be reconciled; on our bended knees, with tears of joy, and a torrent of thankfulness, we ought to have received the transporting news. But when, instead of such an angelic envoy, he sends his *only-begotten Son;* his Son beyond all thought illustrious, to make us the gracious overture:—sends him from the " habitation " of his holiness and glory," to put on the *infirmities* of mortality, and dwell in a tabernacle of clay:—sends him, not barely to make us a transient visit, but to abide *many years* in our inferior and miserable world:—sends him, not to excercise dominion over monarchs, but to wear out his life in the ignoble form of a *servant;* and, at last, to make his exit under the infamous character of a *malefactor!* was ever love like this? did ever grace stoop so low?—Should the sun be shorn of all his radiant honors, and degraded into a *clod* of the valleys; should all the dignitaries of heaven be deposed from their thrones, and degenerate into *insects* of a

* Psal. viii. 3, 4.

day; great, great would be the abasement. But *nothing* to thine, most blessed JESUS; *nothing* to thine, thou prince of peace; when, for us men, and for our salvation, thou didst not abhor the coarse accommodations of the *manger;* thou didst not decline even the gloomy horrors of the *grave.*

'TIS well, the sacred oracles have given this doctrine, the most explicit confirmation, and evidence quite incontestable. Otherwise, a favour so undeserved, so unexpected, and rich beyond all imagination, might stagger our belief. —Could HE, who launches all these planetary globes, through the illimitable void; and leads them on, from age to age, in their extensive career; could HE resign his hands, to be *confined* by the girding cord; and his back to be *plowed*, by the bloody scourge? Could HE, who crowns all the stars with inextinguishable *brightness;* be himself defiled with *spitting*, and disfigured with the thorny scar? It is the greatest of wonders, and yet the surest of truths.

O! YE mighty orbs, that roll along the spaces of the sky; I wondered, a little while ago, at your vast dimensions, and ample circuits. But now my amazement ceases; or rather, is entirely swallowed up by a much more stupendous subject. Methinks, your enormous bulk is shrivelled to an *atom;* your prodigious revolutions are contracted to a *span;* while I muse upon the far more elevated heights, and unfathomable depths; the infinitely more extended lengths, and unlimited breadths, *of* this *love of GOD in CHRIST JESUS.**

CONTEMPLATING this stately expanse, I see a mirror, which represents, in the most awful colours, the *heinousness* of human *guilt.*—Ten thousand volumes; wrote on purpose, to display the aggravation of my various acts of disobedience; could not so effectually convince me of their inconceivable enormity, as the consideration of that *all-glorious person;* who, to make an atonement for them, spilt the last drop of his blood.—*I have sinned,* may every child

* Eph. iii. 18, 19.

of adam say; and when [illegible] I come unto thee, O thou observer of men?* Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? Vain commutation! [illegible] by the blessed GOD, with the utmost abh[illegible] -Will all the potentates, that sway the sceptre in a thousand kingdoms, devote their royal and honored lives, to rescue an obnoxious creature from the stroke of vengeance? Alas! it must cost more, incompa- [illegible]

[illegible] content to assume my nature, and resign themselves to Death for my pardon?§ Even this, would be too mean a satisfaction, for inexorable justice; too scanty a reparation,

Cc

* Job vii 20 Not *preserver*, as it stands in our version, but *observer of men* Which phrase, as it denotes the exact and incessant *inspection* of the divine eye, as it intimates the absolute impossibility, that any transgression should *escape* the divine notice, is evidently most proper, both to assign the *reason*, and heighten the *emphasis* of the context

§ MILTON sets this thought in a very poetical and striking light —All the sanctities of Heaven stand round the throne of the Supreme Majesty GOD foresees and foretels the fall of man, the *ruin* which will unavoidably ensue on his transgression, and the utter *impossibility*, of his being able to extricate himself, from the abyss of misery.

He, with his whole posterity must die,
Die he, or justice must, unless for him
Some other able, and as willing pay
The rigid satisfaction, death for death

After which affecting representation, intended to raise the most tender emotions of pity, the following enquiry is addressed to all the surrounding angels:

Say heav'nly powers where shall we find such love?
Which of you will be mortal, to redeem
Man's mortal crime? and die, the dead to save?
He ask'd, but all the heav'nly choir stood mute,
And silence was in heav'n —

There is, to me at least, an inimitable spirit and beauty in the last circumstance That such an innumerable multitude, of generous and compassionate beings, should be struck [illegible] with surprize and terror, at the very mention of *the [illegible] ure and ran om [illegible]* No *language* is so eloquent as this *silence* Words could not possibly have expressed in so emphatical a manner, the *[illegible]* of the task, the *[illegible]* of any or all [illegible] to execute it [illegible] and *matchless love* of the eternal Son, in undertaking the tremendous work, not only without reluctance, but unsought and unimplored, with readiness, alacrity, and delight

Paradise Lost, B III l [illegible]09 —BENTL Edit

of God's injured honor. So flagrant is human guilt, that nothing, but a victim of *infinite dignity*, could constitute an adequate propitiation.—*He* who said, "let there be light, and there was light;" let there be a firmament, and immediately the blue curtains floated in the sky; *he* must take flesh; he must feel the fierce torments of crucifixion; and pour out his soul in agonies, if ever such transgressors are pardoned.

How vast is that debt; which all the wealth of both the *Indies* cannot discharge! How vitiated that habit of body; which all the drugs produced by nature herself, cannot rectify! But how much more *ruined* was thy condition, O my soul! how much more *heinous* were thy crimes! since nothing less than the sufferings and Death of Messiah, the Son of God, and radiant image of his glory, could effect thy recovery, or cancel thy iniquity.—Though, perhaps, thou art not sunk so very deep in pollution, as some of the most abandoned profligates; yet remember the inestimable ransom, paid to redeem thee from everlasting destruction. Remember this; and "never open thy "mouth any more,"* either to *murmer* at the divine chastisements, or to *glory* in thy own attainments. Remember this; and even *loath* thyself† for "the multitude of thy provocations," and thy great baseness.

Once more: let me view this beautiful, this magnificent expanse; and conocive some juster apprehensions, of the unknown richness of my *Saviour's atonement.*—I am informed by a writer, who cannot mistake, that the high-priest of my profession, who was also the facrifice for my sins, is *higher than the heavens*;‡ more exalted in dignity, more bright with glory, than all the heavenly mansions, and all their illustrious inhabitants. If my heart was humbled, at the consideration of its excessive guilt; how do all my drooping powers revive, at this delightful thought? The poor criminal that seecemed to be *tottering* on the very brink of the infernal pit; is *raised*, by such a belief, even to the portals of paradise. My self-abasement, I trust, will al-

* Ezek. xvi 63. † Ezek xxxvi 31 ‡ Heb vii 26.

ways continue; but my fears, under the influence of such a conviction, are quite gone. I do not, I cannot doubt the efficacy of this propitiation. *While I see a* glimpse of its matchless excellency; and *verily believe* myself, interested in its merits; I know not what it is, to feel any misgiving suspicions; but am stedfast in faith, and joyful through hope.

BE my iniquities like debts of millions of talents, here is more than full payment for all that prodigious sum. Let the enemy of mankind, and accuser of the brethren, load me with invectives; this one plea, *a Divine Redeemer died*, most thoroughly quashes every indictment. For, though there be much turpitude, and manifold transgressions, "there is no condemnation to those that are in CHRIST JE-"SUS."—Nay, were I chargeable with all the vilest deeds, which have been committed in every age of the world, by every nation of men; even in this most deplorable case, I need not sink into despair. Even such guilt, though grievous beyond all expression, is not to be compared with that *abundance* of *grace* and righteousness, which dwell in the incarnate divinity.—How great, how transcendently glorious, are the *perfections* of the adored JEHOVAH! So great, so superlatively precious, is the *expiation* of the dying JESUS. 'Tis imposible for the human mind, to *exalt* this atonement, too highly; 'tis impossible for the HUMBLE PENITENT, to *confide* in it, too steadily. The scriptures, the scriptures of eternal truth, have said it (exult, my soul, in the belief of it!) that the blood on which we rely, is GOD's *own blood*;* and therefore all-sufficient to expiate, omnipotent to save.

DAVID, that egregious sinner, but more exemplary saint, seems to have been well acquainted with this comfortable truth. What else can be the import of that very remarkable, but most devout declaration? *Thou shalt purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: thou shalt wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.*—"I have been "guilty, I must confess, of the most complicated and shock-

* Acts xx. 28.

"ing crimes: crimes, inflamed by every aggravating circumstance, with regard to myself, my neighbour, and my GOD. *Myself*, who have been blessed above men, and the distinguished favourite of Providence; *my neighbour* who, in the most dear and tender interests, has been irreparably injured; *my GOD*, who might justly expect the most grateful returns of duty, instead of such enormous violations of his law. Yet, all horrid and execrable as *my offence* is, it is nothing to the superabundant merit of that *great Redeemer*, who was promised from the foundations of the world; in whom all my fathers trusted; who is the hope of all the ends of the earth. Though my conscience be more loathsome, with adulterous impurity, than the *dunghill*; though treachery and murder have rendered it even black as the gloom of *hell*; yet, washed in the 'fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness,'* I shall be—I say not, pure only, this were a disparagement to the efficacy of my Saviour's Death; but I shall be fair as the *lily*, and white as the *snow*. Nay, let me not derogate ftom the glorious object of my confidence; cleansed by this sovereign sanctifying stream, I shall be *fairer* than the full-blown lily, *whiter* than the new-fallen snows."

POWER, saith the scripture, *belongeth unto GOD*.†—And in what majestic lines, is this attribute of JEHOVAH written, throughout the whole volume of the Creation? especially, through those magnificent pages, unfolded in yonder starry regions. Which are therefore stiled by the sweet and seraphic singer of *Israel*, "The firmament of his power."‡ Because the grand *exploits* of *Omnipotence* are there displayed, with the utmost pomp; and recorded, in the most legible characters.

WHO, that looks upward to the midnight sky; and, with an eye of reason, beholds its rolling wonders; who can forbear enquiring, of *what* were those mighty orbs *formed*?—Amazing to relate! they were produced without materials. They sprung from emptiness itself. The stately fabric of

* Zech. xiii. 1. † Psal. lxii. 11 ‡ Psal. cl. 1.

universal nature emerged out of *nothing*.—What *instruments* were used by the Supreme Architect, to fashion the parts with such exquisite niceness, and give so beautiful a polish to the whole? How was all connected into one finely-proportioned, and nobly-finished structure?—A *bare fiat* accomplished all. LET THEM BE, said GOD. He added no more; and immediately the marvellous edifice arose; adorned with every beauty; displaying innumerable perfections and declaring, amidst enraptured seraphs, its great Creator's praise. "By the *word* of the LORD were the heavens made, "and all the host of them by the *breath* of his mouth."—What forceful machinery *fixed* some of those ponderous globes, on an immoveable basis? What irresistible impulse *bowled* others, through the circuit of the heavens? What coercive energy *confined* their impetuous courses, within limits astonishingly large, yet most minutely true? Nothing but his *sovereign will*. For all things were at first constituted, and all to this day abide, according to his ordinance.

WITHOUT any toilsome assiduity or laborious process, to—raise—to touch—to *speak* such a multitude of immense bodies into being—to *launch* them through the spaces of the sky, as an arrow from the hand of a giant—to impress on such *unwieldy* masses a motion, far out-stripping the swiftness of the winged Creation—and to *continue* them in the same rapid whirl, for thousands and thousands of years—What an amazing instance of infinite might is this!—Can any thing be impossible to the LORD, the LORD GOD; the Creator and Controuler, of all the ends of the earth all the regions of the universe? Rather, is not all that we count *difficult*, perfect ease to that glorious Being, who only spake, and the world was made?* Who only gave command, and the stupendous axle was lodged fast, the lofty wheels moved complete?—What a sure defence, O my soul, is this everlasting strength of thy GOD! Be this thy continual *refuge*, in the article of danger; this thy never-failing *resource*, in every time of need.

* Psal. xxxiii. 9.

WHAT cannot this uncontroulable power, of the great JEHOVAH, effect for his people? Be their miseries ever so galling, cannot this GOD relieve them? Be their wants ever so numerous, cannot this GOD supply them? Be their corruptions within, ever so inveterate; or their temptations without, ever so importunate; cannot this mighty, mighty GOD subdue the former, and fortify them against the latter?—Should *trials*, with an incessant vehemence, sift thee as wheat; should *tribulation*, with a weight of woes, almost grind thee to powder; should *pleasure* with her bewitching smiles, solicit thee to delicious ruin; yet hold thee "fast by GOD," and lay thy help upon Him, that is omnipotent. Thou canst not be involved in such calamitous circumstances, or exposed to such imminent peril; but thy GOD, whom thou servest, is able to deliver thee from the one, and to support thee under the other.—To *support!* to *deliver!* Let me not dishonor the unlimited greatness of his power. He is able to exalt thee, from the deepest distress, to the most triumphant joy; and to make even a complication of evils, work together for thy everlasting good. *He is able*, not only to accomplish what I have been speaking, but *to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask, or think.*

O! THE *wretched condition* of the wicked, who have this Lord of all power for their enemy! O! the *desperate madness* of the ungodly, who provoke the Almighty to jealousy! besotted creatures! are you able to contend with your Maker, and enter the lists against incensed omnipotence? can you *bear* the fierceness of his wrath, or sustain the vengeance of his lifted arm? at his presence, though awfully serene, the hills melt like wax, and the "mountains skip like frighted lambs." At the least intimation of his displeasure, the foundations of nature rock, and the "pillars of heaven tremble." How then can a withered leaf endure, when "his lips are full of indignation, and his tongue as a devouring fire?"—Or can any thing *screen* a guilty worm, when the great and terrible God shall *whet his glittering sword, and his hand take hold on* inexorable *judgment?* when *that hand*, which shoots the planets, masses of excessive bulk, with such surprising rapidity, thro'

the sky: *that hand*, which darts the comets to such unmeasurable distances, beyond the orbit of our remotest planet, beyond the pursuit of the strongest eye; when that hand is stretched out to punish, can the munition of rocks, the intervention of seas, or even interposing worlds, divert the blow?—Consider this, *ambition;* and bow thy haughty crest. Consider this, *disobedience;* and bend thy iron sinew. O! consider this, all ye that forget, or affront, the tremendous JEHOVAH. He can, by a single act of his will, lay the universe in utter ruin: and can he want power to bring *you* in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, to the dust of death, or to the flames of hell? He has—I say not, ten thousand lightnings to scorch you to ashes; ten thousand thunders to crush you into atoms; but, what is unspeakably more dreadful—He has an *army* of terrors, even in the *look* of his angry countenance. His very frown is worse than destruction.

I CANNOT dismiss this subject, without admiring the *patience* of the blessed GOD. Who, though so strong and powerful, yet "is provoked every day."—Surely, as is his majesty, so is his mercy; his pity altogether commensurate to his power. If I vilify but the name of an earthly monarch; I lose my liberty, and am confined to the dungeon. If I appear in arms, and draw the sword, against my national Sovereign; my life is forfeited, and my very blood will scarce atone for the crime. But thee I have dishonored, O! thou King immortal and invisible! Against thee my breast has fomented *secret disaffection;* my behaviour has risen up in *open rebellion;* and yet I am spared, yet I am preserved. Instead of being banished from thy presence; I sit at thy table, and am fed from thy hand. Instead of pursuing me with *thunder-bolts* of vengeance, thy *favors* surround me on every side. That arm, that injured arm, which might justly fall, with irretrievable ruin, on a traitor's head; is most graciously stretched out, to caress him, with the tenderest endearments; to cherish him, with every instance of parental kindness.—O! thou mightiest, thou best of Beings, how am I painted at my very soul, for such shameful and odious disingenuity! Let me always abominate myself, as the basest of creatures; but adore

that unwearied long-suffering of thine, which refuses to be irritated; *love* that unremitted goodness, which no acts of ingratitude could stop, or so much as check, in its gracious current. O! let this stuborn heart; which duty could not bind; which threatenings could not awe; be the captive, the *willing captive*, of such triumphant benficence.

I HAVE often been struck with wonder at that Almighty skill, which *weighed* the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance; which *proportioned* the waters in the hollow of its hand, and *adjusted* the dust of the earth by a measure. But how much more marvellous is that magnificent œconnomy, which *poised* the stars with inexpressible nicety, and *meted* out the heavens with a span! Where all is prodigiously vast; immensely various; and yet more than mathematically exact. Surely, the *wisdom* of GOD manifests itself in the skies, and shines in those lucid orbs. Shines on the contemplative mind, with a lustre incomparably brighter, than that which their united splendors transmit to the eye.

BEHOLD yonder countless multitude of globes; consider their amazing magnitude; regard them as the sovereigns of so many systems, each accompanied with his planetary equipage. Upon this supposition, what a multiplicity of mighty spheres, must be perpetually running their rounds, in the upper regions! yet, none mistake their way, or *wander* from the goal; though they pass through trackless and unbounded fields. None *fly off* from their orbits, into extravagant excursions; none *press in* upon their centre, with too near an approach. None *interfere* with each other in their perennial passage; or *intercept* the kindly communications of another's influence. But all their rotations proceed in eternal harmony; keeping such time, and observing such laws, as are most exquisitely adapted to the perfection of the whole.

WHILE I contemplate this "excellent Wisdom, which "made the heavens," and attunes all their motions; how am I asbashed at that mixture of arrogance and folly, which has, at any time, inclined me to *murmur* at thy *dispensations* O LORD! what is this, but a sort of implicit treason against thy supremacy; and a tacit denial of thy infinite

understanding?—Hast thou so regularly placed such a wonderful diversity of systems through the spaces of the universe?—Didst thou, without any probationary essays, without any improving retouches, speak them into the most consummate perfection?—Dost thou continually superintend all their circumstances, with a sagacity that never mistakes the minutest tittle of propriety? And shall I be so unaccountably stupid, as to question the *justness* of thy *discernment*, in "choosing my inheritance, and fixing the bounds of my habitation!"—Not a single erratum, in modelling the structure; determining the distance; and conducting the career of *unnumbered* worlds! And shall my peevish humour presume to censure thy interposition, with regard to the affairs of *one* inconsiderable creature; whose stature, in such a comparative view, is less than a span; and his present duration, little more than a moment?

O! THOU GOD, "in whose hand my breath is, and "whose are all my ways," let such sentiments as now possess my thoughts, be always lively on my heart! these shall compose my mind into *a chearful* acquiescence, and a *thankful* submission; even when afflictions gall the sense, or disappointments break my schemes. Then shall I, like the grateful Patriarch,* in all the changes of my condition, and even in the depths of distress, erect an *altar* of adoring resignation; and describe it with the Apostle's *motto*, TO GOD ONLY WISE. Then, shouldst thou give me leave to be the carver of my own fortunes, I would humbly desire to relinquish the grant, and recommit the disposal of myself to thy unerring beneficence. Fully persuaded, that *thy counsels*; though contrary to my froward inclinations, or even afflictive to my flesh; are incomparably more eligible, than the blind impulse of my own will, however soothing to animal nature.

ON a careless inspection, you perceive no accuracy or uniformity in the position of the heavenly bodies. They

* See *Gen.* xii. 7, 8.

appear like an *illustrious chaos;* a promiscuous heap of shining globes; neither ranked in order, nor moving by line.—But, what *seems* confusion, *is* all regularity. What carries a show of negligence, is really the result of the most masterly contrivance. You think, perhaps, they rove in their aerial flight; but they rove by the nicest rule, and without the least error. Their circuits, though seemingly devious; their mazes, though intricate to our apprehensions;† are marked out, not indeed with golden compasses, but by the infinitely more exact determinations of the all-wise Spirit.

So, what wears the *appearance* of calamity, in the allotments appointed for the godly, has really the *nature* of a blessing. It issues from fatherly love, and will terminate in the richest good. If *Joseph* is snatched from the embraces of an indulgent parent, and abandoned to slavery in a foreign land; it is in order to save the holy family, from perishing by famine; and to preserve "the seed, in "whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed." If he falls into the deepest disgrace, it is on purpose that he may rise to the highest honors. Even the confinement of the prison, by the unsearchable workings of Providence, opens his way to the right-hand of the throne itself.—Let the most afflicted servant of Jesus, wait the final upshot of things. He will *then* discover the apparent expediency of all those tribulations; which *now*, perhaps, he can hardly admit, without reluctance; or suffer, without some struggles of dissatisfaction. Then, the gushing tear, and the heaving sigh, will be turned into tides of gratitude, and hymns of holy wonder.

In the mean time, let no audacious railer, presumptuously impeach the Divine procedure; but, adoring where we cannot comprehend, let us expect the *evolution* of the mysterious plan. Then, shall every eye perceive; that the seeming labyrinths of providence, were the most *direct* and

† ——— Mazes intricate,
Eccentric, intervolv'd; yet regular
Then most, when most irregular they seem.
MILT.

compendious way; to effect his general purposes of grace, and to bring about each one's particular happiness.*—Then also, shall it be clearly shewn, in the presence of applauding worlds; why, virtue pined in want, while vice rioted in affluence. Why, amiable innocence so often dragged the dungeon *chain*, while horrid guilt trailed the *robe* of state.—That day of universal audit, that day of everlasting retribution, will not only *vindicate*, but *magnify*, the whole management of heaven. The august sessions shall close with this unanimous, this glorious acknowledgment: "though *clouds and darkness*, impenetrable by any human "scrutiny, *were* sometimes *round about* the supreme con-"ductor of things; yet *righteousness and judgment were the* "constant *habitation of his seat*;† the invariable standard "of all his administrations."—Thus (if I may illustrate the grandest truths, by inferior occurrences) while we view the arras, on the side of *least distinction*, it is void of any elegant fancy; without any nice strokes of art; nothing but a confused jumble of incoherent threads. No sooner is the piece beheld in its *proper aspect*, but the suspected rudeness vanishes, and the most curious arrangement takes place. We are charmed with designs of the finest taste, and figures of the most graceful form. All is shaped with symmetry; all is clad in beauty.

The *goodness* of God is most eminently displayed in the skies.—Could we take an understanding survey, of whatever is formed by the Divine Architect, throughout the whole extent of *material* things; our minds would be transported with their excellencies, and our tongues echo back that great encomium, they are "good, very good."‡ Most *beautiful* in themselves; contrived by unerring wisdom, and executed with inimitable skill. Most *useful* in their functions; exactly fitting the places they fill, and com-

* —The *moral world*,
Which though to us it seems embroil'd, moves on
In higher order, fitted, and impell'd
By *wisdom's* finest hand, and issuing all
In general good.

Thoms. *Wint.* l. 586.

† Psal. [illegible]

‡ Gen. i. 31.

pleatly answering the purposes, for which they were intended.—All the parts of the inanimate creation proclaim, both by their intrinsic and relative excellencies, the all-diffusive beneficence of their Maker.

How much more wonderful are the displays of Divine indulgence, in the worlds of life! because dead matter is incapable of delight; therefore, the gracious Creator has raised innumerable ranks of *perceptive existence.* Such as are qualified to taste his bounty, and enjoy each a happiness suited to its peculiar state. With this view, he furnished the regions of inferior nature, with an order and a series of sensitive beings. The *waters* teem with shoals of finny inhabitants. The *dry land* swarms with animals of every order. The dwellings of the *firmament*, are occupied by multitudes of winged people. Not so much as a *green leaf*, philosophers say, but lodges, and accommodates its puny animalcule tenants.*—And wherefore this diversity, this profusion of living creatures; flying the air, treading the ground, and gliding through the paths of the sea? for this most glorious reason—That the eternal Sovereign may exercise his superabundant goodness: that his *table* may be furnished, with millions and millions of *guests;* that he may fill, every hour, every moment, their mouths with food, or their hearts with gladness.

* A very celebrated poet, in a beautiful paragraph on this subject, informs his readers, that all nature swarms with life. In subterranean *cells*, the earth heaves with vital motion. Even the hard *stone*, in the very inmost recesses of its impenetrable citadel, holds multitudes of animated inhabitants. The *pulp* of mellow fruit, and all the productions of the orchard, feed the invisible nations. Each *liquid*, whether of acid taste, or milder relish; abounds with various forms of sensitive existence. Nor is the pure *stream*, or transparent *air*, without their colonies of unseen people.—In which constitution of things, we have a wonderful instance, not only of the Divine goodness to those minute beings, in giving them a *capacity* for animal gratifications; but of his tender care for mankind, in making them *imperceptible* to our senses.

——— These, conceal'd
By the kind art of forming heav'n, escape
The grosser eye of man: for, if the
In worlds inclos'd should on his senses burst;
From cates ambrosial and the nectar'd bowl,
He'd turn abhorrent; and, in dead of night,
When silence sleeps o'er all, be stunn'd with noise.

THOMSON'S *Summer.*

BUT, what a small theatre are three or four *elements*, for the operations of JEHOVAH'S bounty! his magnificent liberality, scorn such scanty limits. If you ask, wherefore he has created *all worlds*, and replenished them with an unknown multiplicity of beings; rising, one above another, in an endless gradation of still richer endowments, and still nobler capacities? the answer is—for the manifestation of his own glory, and especially for the *communication* of his inexhaustible beneficence.—The great Creator could pro-propose no advantage to himself. His bliss is incapable of any addition. "Before the mountains were brought forth, "or ever the earth and the world were made," he was supremely happy, in his own independent and all-sufficient self. His grand design therefore, in erecting so many stately fabrics; and peopling them with so many tribes of inhabitants; was, to *transfuse* his exuberant kindness, and *impart* felicity in all its forms. Ten thousand worlds, stocked with ten thousand times ten thousand ranks, of sensitive and intelligent existence, are so many spacious gardens; which, with rivers of communicated joy, this overflowing fountain waters continually.

BOUNDLESS,* and (which raises our idea of this divine principle, to the very highest degree of perfection) disinterested * munificence! How *inexpressibly amiable* is the blessed GOD, considered in this charming light! Is it possible to conceive any excellence, so adorable and lovely; as infinite benevolence, guided by unerring wisdom, and exerting Almighty Power, on purpose to make a whole universe happy?—O my soul, what an *irresistible attractive* is here! what a most worthy object, for thy most fervent affection! Shall now every glittering toy, become a rival to this transcendently beneficent Being, and rob him of thy heart?—No. Let his all-creating arm teach thee, to trust in the fulness of his sufficiency:—let his all-superintending eye incline thee, to acquiesce in the dispensations of his

* * In this sense, *there is none good but one, that is GOD*. None universally and essentially good. None, whose goodness extends itself, in an infinite *variety* of blessings, to every capable object; or, who always dispenses his favors, from the *sole* principle of *free* and disinterested benevolence.

providence:—and let his bounty; so freely vouchsafed; so amply diffused; induce thee to *love* him, with all the ardor of a grateful and admiring soul; induce thee to *serve* him, not with a joyless awe, or slavish dread, but with unfeigned alacrity, and a delightful complacency.

IF the goodness of GOD is so admirably seen, in the works of nature, and the favors of Providence; with what a noble superiority, does it *even triumph*, in the *mystery* of *redemption!* Redemption is the brightest mirror, in which to contemplate this most lovely attribute of the Deity. Other gifts are only as *mites* from the Divine treasury; but redemption opens, I had almost said exhausts, all the *stores* of indulgence and grace. Herein, "GOD *commendeth* his love:"* not only manifests, but sets it off, as it were, with every bright and grand embellishment: manifests it in so stupendous a manner, that it is beyond parallel; beyond thought; "above all blessing and praise."—Was HE not thy *Son*, everlasting GOD, thy *only* Son; the Son of thy bosom from eternal ages; the highest object of thy complacential delight? Was not thy love to this adorable Son, incomparably greater than the tenderest affection of *any*, or the united affections of *all*, mortal parents? Was not the blessed JESUS more illustrious in excellency, than all angels; more exalted in dignity, than all heavens? yet didst thou resign HIM, for poor mortals! for vile sinners!—Couldst thou see him descend, from his royal *throne;* and take up his abode, in the sordid *stable?* See him forego the *homage* of the seraphim; and stand exposed to the reproachful *indignities*, of an insolent rabble? See him arraigned at the bar, and sentenced to death; numbered with malefactors, and nailed to the gibbet; bathed in his own innocent blood, and pouring out his soul in agonies of sorrow?—Could the Father, the Father *himself*, with unknown philanthropy,† say? "it shall, it shall, be so! my pity to re-" bellious man pleads, and prevails. Awake, therefore,

* Rom. v. 8.

† *Philanthropy*, that is loving-kindness to man.

" O *sword*,‡ edged with divine wrath. Awake; and be
" sheathed in that *immaculate* breast; pierce that *dearly*
" *beloved* heart. I am content, that my son endure the
" sharpness of death, rather than sinful mortals perish for
" ever."—Incomprehensible love! may it henceforward, be the favorite subject of my *meditation;* more delightful to my musing mind, than applause to the ambitious ear! may it be the darling theme of my *discourse;* sweeter to my tongue, than the droppings of the honeycomb to my taste! may it be my choicest *comfort*, through all the changes of life; and my reviving *cordial*, even in the last extremities of dissolution itself!

A *PROPHET* contemplating, with a distant survey, this unexampled instance of Almighty love, is wrapt into a *transport* of *devotion*. At a loss for proper acknowledgements, he calls upon the whole universe to aid his labouring breast, and supply his lack of praise *Sing melodiously, ye* vaulted *heavens; exult, and even leap for gladness, thou* cumberous *earth; ye mountains*, break your long silence, aud *burst into peals of loudest acclamation; for the* LORD, by this precious gift, and this great salvation, *hath comforted his people*.—*A sacred historian* hath left it upon record; that, at the first exhibition of this ravishing scene, there was with the angel, who brought the blessed tidings, a multitude of the heavenly host; praising GOD, and making the concave of the skies resound with their hallelujahs. At the dawn of the Sun of righteousness, when he was beginning to rise with healing in his wings, the *morning stars* sang together, and all the *sons* of *GOD* shouted for joy.—And shall *man*, whom this gracious dispensation principally respects; shall *man*, who is the centre of all these gladdening rays; shall he have no heart to adore, no anthem to celebrate, this

Love without end, and without measure grace?

MILTON.

‡ Zech.

How *pure* is the state of the sky, and how *clear* its aspect! clearer than the limpid stream; purer than the transparent crystal; and more curiously fine, than the polished mirror. That *stately ceiling*; fretted with gold, and stretched to an extent of many millions of leagues; is not disfigured with a single flaw. That *azure canopy*; embroided with stars, and spacious enough to form a covering for unnumbered worlds; is without the least spot or wrinkle.—Yet this even this, will scarce yield us, so much as a faint representation of the *divine purity*. God, is a God of matchless and transcendent excellency. His ways are uprightness itself. His counsels and words are the very sanctity of wisdom and of truth. The *laws*, which he has given to universal nature; are exquisitely contrived, and beyond all possibility of improvement. The *precepts*, which he has appointed for the human race; are a complete summary, of all that is honorable in itself, and perfective of the rational mind.—Not the least *oversight*, in planning a series of events for all futurity. Not the least mal-administration, in managing the affairs of every age, since time began; and of every nation, under the whole heavens.—Pardon these disparaging expressions. A *negative* perfection is far, far beneath thy dignity, *O thou most Highest*. In all these instances; in all thy acts, and all thy attributes; thou art not only holy, but "*glorious* in *Holiness*."

So inconceivably holy is the Lord God of hosts, that he sees *defilement* even in the *brightness* of the firmament. The living sapphire of the heavens, before his majesty, loses its lustre. *Yea, the stars* (though the most pure and resplendent part of the heavens) *are not pure in his sight. how much less man, who* in his fallen and depraved state, *is* but as *a worm*, that crawls in the corrupted carcase; *and the Son of man, who*, by reason of his manifold actual impurities, *is* too justly compared to *an insect*, that wallows amidst stench and putrefaction?—Is there not then abundant cause, for the most irreproachable and eminent of mankind, to renounce all arrogant pretensions; to lay aside every assuming air; to take nothing but *shame* and confusion to themselves? A holy prophet, and a holy prince, felt such humbling impressions, from a glimpse of the un-

created purity. *I abhor myself in dust and ashes,** was the declaration of the one: *I am a man of unclean lips,*† the confession of the other.—Should not this teach us all, to adore the divine mercies, for that precious *purifying fountain;* which was foretold from the foundation of the world; but was opened at that awful juncture, when knotty whips tore the flesh; when ragged thorns mangled the temples; when sharpened nails cut fresh sluices for the crimson current; when the gash of the spear compleated the dreadful work, and *forthwith flowed there,* from the wounded heart, *blood and water?*

Especially, since God himself saw no blemish in his *dear Son. He looketh to the moon, and it shineth not:* yet his all-penetratiug and jealous eye, discerned nothing amiss, nothing defective, in our glorious Redeemer. Nothing amiss? he bore this most illustrious testimony, concerning his holy Child Jesus: "in him I am *pleased;* I am *well* "*pleased;* I acquiesce, with intire complacency, and with "the higest delight, in his person; his undertaking; and "the whole execution of his office."—How should this thought, enliven our hopes; while the other, mortifies our pride? should not our hearts spring within us, and even leap for joy; at the repeated assurance given us by revelation, that such a divinely excellent person is our Mediator? What apparent reason has every believer, to adopt the blessed Virgin's exclamation; "*my soul doth magnify the LORD* for his transcendent mercy; *and my spirit rejoices,* "not in wide extended harvests, waving over my fertile "glebe; not in armies vanquished, and leaving the peculiar treasure of nations for my spoil; but in an infi- "nitely richer, nobler blessing, even *in GOD my Sa-* "*viour*" That a person so sublime and perfect, has vouchsafed to become my *surety:* to give himself for my *ransom,* in the world below; and act as my *advocate,* in the royal presence above: yea, to make *my* recovery, the reward of his sufferings; *my* final felicity, the honour of his mediatorial kingdom!

* Job xlii. 6. † Isa. vi. 5.

When an innumerable multitude of bodies, many of them more than a *hundred thousand miles* in diameter, are all set in motion:—when the orbits, in which they perform their periodical revolutions, are extended at the rate of several hundreds of *millions:*—when each has a *distinct* and seperate sphere, for finishing his vast circuit:—when no one knows, what it is to be cramped; but each most *freely expatiates*, in his unbounded career:—when every one is placed, at such an *immense remove* from each other; that they appear to their respective inhabitants, only as so many spots of light:—How astonishing must be the expanse, which yields *room* for all those mighty globes, and their widely-diffused operations! to what prodigious lengths, did the Almighty builder stretch his line, when he marked out the stupendous platform!—I wonder at such an immeasurable extent. My very thoughts are lost, in this abyss of space. But, be it known to mortals; be it never forgot by sinners? that, in all its most surprising amplitude, it is *small*, it is *scanty*, compared with the bounty and the mercy of its Maker.

His *bounty* is absolutely without limits, and without end. The most lavish generosity cannot drain, or even diminish, his munificence. O! all ye tribes of men; or rather, all ye classes of intelligent creatures; ye are not streightened in the *liberality* of your ever-blessed Creator; be not streightened in your own *expectations.* "Open your mouth wide, and he shall "fill it, with copious and continual draughts from the cup of joy. Your God, on whom is your whole dependence, is more than able; is more than willing to "supply all your need, according to his riches in "glory."—When the Lord Jehovah is the giver, and his grace the gift; let your wishes be unbounded, and your craving insatiable. All that created beings can possibly *covet*, is but a very small pittance of that unknown happiness, which the everlasting Benefactor is ready to *bestow*. Suppose every charitable disopsition, which warms the hearts of the human race, added to those more inlarged affections, which glow in heavenly bosoms; what were they all, even in their highest exercise, compared with the benignity of the divine nature?—Bless *me* then, thou eternal source of

of love; bless *all* that reverence thy holy name; according to thy own most profuse goodness. Whose great prerogative it is, to disdain all measure. O! bless us, in propotion to that grace; the richness of which (unutterable by the tongues of men, and of angels) was once *spoken* in the groans, and *written* in the wounds, of thy expiring Son!

Spacious indeed are these heavens! where do they begin? where do they end? what is their extent? can angels answer my question? have angels travelled the vast circuit? can angels measure the bounds of space? no; 'tis boundless, 'tis unknown, 'tis amazing all.—How charming then to reflect, that the *mercy* of God is "greater than the heavens;" is more extensive than the dimensions of the sky. Transporting reflection! let me indulge thee once more. Let me think over the delightful displays of this lovely attribute; and, while I admire the *trophies* of forgiving goodness, add one to the number.—With what amiable and affecting colours, is this represented in the *parable* of the *prodigal!* What could induce that foolish youth, to forsake his father's house? had he not been tenderly cherished by the good parent; and loaded with benefits, from his indulgent hand? were not the restraints of parental goverment, an easy yoke? or rather, a *preservative* from *ruin?* Notwithstanding every endearing obligation, he revolts from his duty; and launches into such scandalous irregularities, as were dishonorable to his family, and destructive to himself. When necessity, not choice, but sharp necesity drove him to a submissive return; does the injured father stand aloof, or shut his doors? quite the reverse. He espies him, while he is yet a *great way off*; and the moment he beholds the profligate youth, he *has compassion on him.* His bowels yearn; they "sound like an harp," touched with notes divinely soft. He never once thinks of his ungracious departure, and infamous debaucheries. Pity, parental pity, passes an act of oblivion; and, in one instant, cancels a series of long-continued provocations.—So strong are the working of fatherly affection; that he is almost impatient to embrace the naked and destitute wretch. The son's pace is slow, *he arose and came*; the father's is swift, he sprung forth (aged as he was) and *ran.* And is there a single frown in

his brow, or one upbraiding word on his tongue?—Instead of loathing the sordid creature, or reproaching him for his odious excesses; he *falls* on his *neck*, clasps him in his arms, and hugs him to his bosom. Instead of disowning the riotous spendthrift, or rejecting him for his undutiful behaviour; he receives and welcomes him with *kisses* of delight. He rejoices, at his return from extravagance and vice; as he formerly rejoiced, on the day of his nativity.—When this companion of harlots opens his mouth, *before he speaks, the father hears.* He interrupts him, in the midst of his intended speech, The overflowings of his compassionate heart can brook no delay. He seems to be *uneasy* himself, till he has made the afflicted penitent *glad*, with the assurance of his acceptance, and the choicest of his favors.—While the poor abashed offender seeks nothing more, than not to be abhorred; he is thoroughly reconciled, and honored before the whole family. While he requests no other indulgence, than only to be treated as the *meanest servant;* he is cloathed with the *best robe*; he is feasted with the *fatteed calf;* he is caressed as the dearest of children.—Was there ever so bright and winning a picture, of the tenderest mercy; most freely vouchsafed, even to the most unworthy of creatures? Yet *thus*, my soul; and *thus*, my fellow-sinner; will the LORD GOD of everlasting compassions receive us; if, sensible of our misery, and thirsting for salvation, we turn to him through JESUS CHRIST.

WHERE sin has abounded, says the proclamation from the court of heaven, *grace doth much more abound.—Manasseh* was a monster of barbarity; for he caused his own children to pass through the fire, and filled *Jerusalem* with innocent blood. *Manasseh* was an adept in iniquity; for he not only multiplied, and to an extravagant degree, his own sacrilegious impieties; but he poisoned the principles, and perverted the manners of his subjects, *making them to be worse than the* most detestable of the *heathen* idolaters.* Yet, through this super-abundant grace, he is humbled; he is reformed; and becomes a child of forgiving love, an

* See 2 Chron. xxxiii.

heir of immortal glory.—Behold that bitter and bloody persecutor *Saul*; when, breathing out threatenings, and bent upon slaughter, he worried the lambs, and put to death the disciples of JESUS. Who, upon the principles of human judgment, would not have pronounced *him* a vessel of wrath, destined to unavoidable damnation? Nay, would not have been ready to conclude; that, if there were heavier chains, and a deeper dungeon, in the world of woe; they must surely be reserved, for such an implacable enemy of true godliness? Yet, (admire, and adore, the inexhaustible treasures of grace!) this *Saul*, is admitted into the goodly fellowship of the prophets; is numbered with the noble army of martyrs, and makes a distinguished figure among the glorious company of the apostles.—The *Corinthians*, were flagitious even to a proverb. Some of them wallowed in such abomiable vices, and habituated them selves to such outrageous acts of injustice, as were a reproach to human nature. Yet, even these sons of violence, and slaves of sensuality, "were washed; were sanctified; were justified."* *Washed*, in the precious blood of a dying Redeemer; *sanctified*, by the powerful operations of the blessed spirit; *justified*, through the infinitely tender mercies of a gracious GOD. Those, who were once the burden of the earth, are now the joy of heaven, and the delight of angels.

THERE is another instance in scripture, which most loudly publishes that sweetest of the divine names, *the LORD, the LORD GOD, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth; keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin.*† An instance this, which exceeds all the former; which exceeds whatever can be imagined; which if I was to forget, the very stones might cry out, and sound it in my ears. I mean the case of those sinners, who murdered the *Prince* of *Peace*, and LORD of Glory.—These men, could scarce have the shadow of an excuse for their crime; hardly a circumstance, to extenuate their guilt. They were well

* 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, 11. † Exod. xxxi

acquainted with his exemplary conversation; they had often heard his heavenly doctrines; they were almost daily spectators of his unequalled miracles. They therefore had all possible reason to *honor* him, as the most illustrious of beings; and to *receive* his gospel as the most inestimable of blessings. Yet, notwithstanding all these engaging motives to love, even above their own lives; they seize his person; asperse his character; drag him before a heathen tribunal; and extort a sentence of death, against innocence and holiness itself. Never was the *vilest slave*, so contumeliously abused; nor the most *execrable malefactor*, so barbarously executed. The sun was confounded at the shocking scene; and one cannot but wonder, how the avenging lightnings could with-hold their flashes. The earth trembled at the horrid deed; and why, why did it not cleave asunder, and open a passage, for such blood-thirsty miscreants, into the nethermost hell? Shall *these* ever hope to obtain forgiveness, from the righteous Judge? Shall not *these* be consigned over to inexorable wrath, and the severest torments?—O the miraculous effects of divine grace! O the triumphant goodness of God our Saviour! Many, even, of *these* impious wretches, at the descent of the Holy Ghost, were convinced of their miserable state; were wounded with penitential remorse; fled to the sanctuary of the cross; had their pardon ratified by the baptismal seal; and, continuing in the apostles doctrine, were made partakers of the kingdom of heaven. Where they now shine, as so many everlasting *monuments* of most distinguished *mercy*; and receive beatitude past utterance, from that very Redeemer, whom once "with wicked "hands they crucified and slew."

Well might the prophet cry out, with a pleasing amazement; "who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth ini"quity, and passeth by transgression!"*—Let all flesh know assuredly; let all flesh rejoice greatly; that with the Lord there is *such mercy*, and with his Christ *such plen*

tiful redemption.—And O! for the voice of an arch-angel, to circulate the glad-tidings through the universe. That the *American* savage, as well as the *European* sage, may learn the *exceeding riches of grace* in Christ. Through whose infinitely satisfying propitiation, all manner of sin, barbarity, and blasphemy, are freely forgiven unto men.

What a grand, and majestic, *dome*, is the sky! where are the *pillars*, which support the stately concave? what art, most exactly true, balanced the pressure? What props, of insuperable strength, sustain the weight! how is that immeasurable arch *upheld*, unshaken and unimparied; while so many generations of busy mortals, have *sunk* and disappeared, as bubbles upon the stream?—If those stars are of such an amazing Bulk; how are they also *fastened*, in their lofty situation? by what miracle in mechanics, are so many thousands of ponderous orbs, kept from falling upon our heads; kept from dashing, both the world to peices, and its inhabitants to Death? are they hung in golden, or adamantine, chains? rest they their enormous load, on rocks of marble, or columns of brass?—No; they are *pendulous* in fluid æther. Yet, are more immoveably *fixed*, than if the everlasting mountains lent their forests, for an axle-tree; or their ridges, for a basis. The Almighty Archiect *stretches out the north*, and its whole starry train, *over the emty place.* He *hangs the earth*, and all the ethereal globes, *upon nothing*.* Yet are their foundations laid so sure, that they can "never be moved at any "time."

No unfit reprensation, to the *sincere* christain, of his *final* perseverance: such as points out the cause, which effects it; and constitutes the pledge, which ascertains it.—His nature is all enfeebled. He is not able, of himself, to think a good thought. He has no *visible* safeguard, nor any sufficiency of his *own*. And yet, whole legions of formidable enemies, are in a confederacy to compass his ruin. The *world*, lays unnumbered snares for his feet: the

* Job xxv. 7.

devil, is incessantly urging the siege, by a multitude of fiery darts, or wily temptations: the *flesh*, like a perfidious inmate, under colour of friendship, and a specious pretence of pleasure, is always forward to betray his integrity.—But, amidst all these threatening circumstances, of personal weakness, and imminent danger, an invisible aid is his defence. "*I will uphold thee*, says the blessed GOD, *with* "*the right hand of my righteousness.*"* Comfortable truth! The arm, which fixes the stars in their orders, and guides the planets in their course, is stretched out to preserve the heirs of salvation. "—*My sheep*, adds the great Redeemer, "*are mine: and they shall never perish; neither shall any pluck them out of my hand.*"† What words are these! and did they come from HIM, who hath all power in heaven, and on earth? and were they spoke to the weakest of the flock; to every unfeigned follower of the great shepherd? then, Omntpotence itself must be *vanquished;* before they can be *destroyed*, either by the seductions of fraud, or the assaults of violence.

IF you ask therefore, what security we have, of enduring to the end, and continuing faithful unto death? the very *same* that establishes the heavens, and settles the ordinances of the universe. Can *these* be thrown into confusion?‡ Then, may the true believer draw back unto perdition. Can the sun be dislodged from his sphere, and rush lawlesly through the sky? then, and then only, can the faith of GOD's elect § be *finally* overthrown.—Be of good courage then, my soul; rely on those divine succours, which are so solemnly stipulated, so faithfully promised. Though thy grace be languid, as the glimmering spark; though the overflowings of corruption, threaten it with total extinction; yet, since the great JEHOVAH has undertaken to cherish the dim principle, "many waters cannot "quench it, nor all the floods drown it." Nay, though it were feeble as the *smoaking flax*, goodness and faithful-

* Isa. xli. 10.

† John x. 28. ‡ Jer. [illegible] § Tit. [illegible]

ness stand engaged, to augment the heat; to raise the fire, and feed the flame; till it beam forth, a lamp of immortal glory, in the heavens.

As to the *faithfulness* of a covenanting God, this may be emblematically seen, in the stability of the heavenly bodies, and the perpetuity of their motions.*—Those that are *fixed* or *stationary*, continue unalterable in their grand elevations. No injurious shocks; no violence of conflicting elements; are able to displace those everlasting hinges, on which dependent worlds revolve. Through the whole flight of time, they recede not, so much as a hair's breadth, from the precise central point of their respective systems.—While the *erratic* or *planetary*, perform their prodigious stages, without any intermission, or the least embarrassment. How soon, and how easily, is the most finished piece of human machinery disconcerted! but all the celestial movements, are so nicely adjusted; all their operations, so critically proportioned; and their mutual dependencies, so strongly connected; that they prolong their beneficial courses, throughout all ages.—While *mighty cities* are overwhelmed with ruin, and their very names lost in oblivion: while *vast empires* are swept from their foundations, and leave not so much as a shadowy trace of their ancient magnificence: while *all terrestrial* things are subject to vicissitude, and fluctuating in uncertainty: *these* are permanent in their duration. *These* are invariable in their functions. "Not one faileth."—Who doubts the constant succession, of day and night; or the regular returns, of summer and winter? and why, O! why shall we doubt the *veracity* of God, or distrust the *accomplishment* of his holy word? Can the ordinance of heaven depart? then only can God forget to be gracious; or neglect the performance of his promise.—Nay, our Lord gives us yet firmer ground of assistance. He affords us a surer bottom for our faith, than the *fundamental laws* of the universe. *Heaven and earth*, he says, *shall pass away; but my word shall*

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* Psal. cxix 89, 90.

not, in a single instance, or in one tittle of their import, *pass away*. No: his sacred word, whatever may obstruct it; whoever may oppose it; shall be fulfilled to the very uttermost.

O powerful word! how astonishing is its efficacy! when this word was issued forth, a thousand worlds emerged out of nothing. Should the mighty orders be repeated, a thousand more would spring into existence. By this word, the vast system of created things is *upheld*, in constant and immutable perfection. Should it give command, or cease to exert its energy; the universal frame would be dissolved, and all nature revert to her original chaos. And this very word is *pledged* for the safety, the comfort, the happiness of the Godly. This inviolable, this Almighty word, *speaks* in all the promises of the gospel.—How strangely infatuated are our souls, that we should value it so little? What infidels are we in fact, that we should depend upon it no more! did it *create*, whatever has a being; and shall it not *work* faith, in our breasts? Do unnumbered worlds, owe their support to this word; and shall it not be sufficient, to buoy up our souls in troubles, or establish them in trials? Is it the *life* of the universe, and shall it be a *dead* letter to mankind?

If I wish to be heard, when I implore heavenly blessings; is not *this privilege* most clearly made over to my enjoyment, in that well known text, "ask, and it shall be given you?"*—If I long for the eternal comforter, to dwell in my heart, and sanctify my nature, have I not an apparent title to this *high prerogative*, conferred in that sweet assertive interrogation; how much more shall your "heavenly Father, give the holy spirit to those that ask him?"†—If I earnestly covet the inestimable treasures, that are comprised in the great Immanuel's Mediation; can I have a firmer claim to the *noble portion*, than is granted in that most precious scripture; "him that cometh to me, "I will in no-wise cast out?"‡—What assurance, of being interested in these unspeakable mercies, would I desire?

* Matt. vii. 7. † Luke xi. 13. ‡ John vi. 37.

what *form* of *conveyance*; what *deed* of *settlement*; were it left to my own option, should I choose? here is the word of a King; the King immortal and invisible; all whose declarations § are truth itself.—If a monarch bestows immunities on a body of men, and confirms them by an authentic charter; no one controverts, no one questions, their right to the royal favours. And why should we suspect the *validity* of those glorious grants, which are made by the everlasting Sovereign of nature; which he has also *ratified* by an oath, and *sealed* with the blood of his Son?—Corporations may be disfrandhised, and charters revoked. Even mountains may be removed, and stars drop from their spheres. But a tennure, founded on the divine promise, is unalienably *secure*; is *lasting*, as eternity itself.

WE have endeavoured to spell a *syllable* of the eternal name, in the ancient manuscript of the sky. We have catched a *glympse* of the Almighty's glory, from the lustre of innumerable stars. But, would we behold all his excellencies, pourtrayed in *full* perfection; and drawn to the very life; let us attentively consider the REDEEMER.—I observe, there are some parts of the firmament, in which the stars seem, as it were, to *cluster*. They are sown thicker, they lie closer, than usual; and strike the eye with redoubled splendor. Like the jewels on a crown, they mingle their beams; and reflect an increase of brilliancy, on each other.—Is there not such an assemblage such a *constellation* of the divine honours, mos amiably effulgent in the blessed JESUS?

DOES not infinite *wisdom* shine, with surpassing brightness, in CHRIST? to the making of a world, there was no obstacle; but to the saving of man, there seemed to be unsurmountable bars. If the rebel is suffered to escape; where is the *inflexible justice*, which denounces "Death as the wages of sin?" If the offender is thoroughly pardoned;

———— If this fail,
The pillar'd firmament is rottenness,
And earth's base built on stubble.
MILT. C.

where is the *inviolable veracity*, which has solemnly declared, "the soul that sinneth, shall die?" These awful attributes are set in terrible array; and, like an impenetrable battalion, oppose the salvation of apostate mankind. Who can suggest a method to *absolve* the traiterous race; yet vindicate the honors of Almighty Sovereignty? This is an intricacy, which, the most exalted finite intelligences, are unable to clear —But, behold the *unsearchable secret* revealed! revealee, in the wonderful redemption, accomplished by a dying Saviour! So plainly revealed, that "he who runs may read;" and even *babes* understand, what minds of the deepest penetration could not contrive.—The Son of God, taking our nature, obeys the law, and undergoes death, in our stead. By this means, the threatened *curse* is executed, in all its rigour; and free *grace* is exercised, in all its riches. Justice maintains her rights, and with a steady hand, administers impartial vengeance; while mercy dispenses her pardons, and welcomes the repentant criminal into the tenderest embraces. Hereby, the seemingly thwarting attributes are reconciled. The sinner is saved, not only in *full consistence*, with the honor of the supreme perfections; but to the most *illustrious manifestation* of them all.

Where does the divine *power* so signally exert itself, as in the cross of Christ, and in the conquests of grace!—Our Lord, in his lowest state of humiliation, gained a more glorious victory; than when, through the dividing sea, and the waste howling wilderness, "he rode upon his chariots and horses of salvation." When his hands "were riveted, with irons, to the bloody tree; he disarmed death of its sting, and plucked the prey from the jaws of hell. Then, even then, while he was crucified in *weakness*, he vanquished the *strong man*, and subdued our most formidable enemies. Even then, he spoiled principalities; triumphed over the powers of darkness; and led captivity captive.—Now he is exalted to his heavenly throne, with what a prevailing efficacy does his grace go forth, "conquering, and to conquer!"—By this the *slaves* of sin are rescued from their bondage, and restored to the *liberty* of righteousness. By this, depraved wretches, whose appetites

were *sensual*, and their dispositions *devilish*; are not only renewed, but renewed after the image of God, and made partakers of a *divine* nature. Millions, millions of lost creatures are snatched, by the interposition of grace, like *brands* from the burning; and, translated into everlasting mansions, shine brighter than the *stars*, shine bright as the *sun*, in the kingdom of their Father.

Would you then see an incomparably more bright display of the divine excellence, than the unspotted firmament, the spangles at heaven, or the golden fountain of day exhibit? Contemplate Jesus of *Nazareth*. He is the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person. In his immaculate nature; in his heavenly tempers; in his most holy life; the *moral perfections* of the deity are represented, to the highest advantage.—Hark! how *mercy*, with her charming voice, speaks in all he utters. See! how *benevolence* pours her choicest stores, in all he does. Did ever *compassion* look so amiably soft, as in those pitying tears, which swelled his eyes, and trickled down his cheeks, to bedew the rancour of his inveterate enemies?—Was it possible for *patience* to assume a form so lovely; as that sweetly-winning conduct, which bore the contradiction of sinners? Which intreated the obstinate, to be reconciled; besought the guilty, not to die?—In other things, we may find some *scattered* rays of Jehovah's glory; but in Christ they are all collected and united. In Christ, they beam forth, with the strongest radiance, with the most delightful effulgence. *Out of Sion*, and in *Sion's* great Redeemer, *hath GOD appeared in perfect beauty.*

Search then, my soul, above all other pursuits, search the records of redeeming love. Let these be the principal object of thy study. Here employ thyself, with the most unwearied assiduity.—*In these are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Such wisdom*; as charms and astonishes the very angels: engages their closest attention, and fills them with the deepest adoration. *Such knowledge*; as qualifies the possessor, if not for offices of dignity on earth, yet for the most honorable advancements in the kingdom of heaven. Disunited from which knowledge, all appli-

cation is but elaborate impertinence; and all science, no better than pompous ignorance.—These records contain the faultless model of duty, and the noblest motives to obedience. Nothing so powerful to work a lively faith, and a joyful hope; as an attentive consideration of our LORD's unutterable merits. Nothing so sovereign, to antidote the pestilential influence of the world, and deliver our affections from a slavery to ignoble objects; as an habitual remembrance of his extreme agonies. The genuine, the ever-fruitful *source* of all *morality*, is the unfeigned love of CHRIST; and the cross, the CROSS, is the appointed *altar*, from which we may fetch a coal, to enkindle this sacred fire.

BEHOLD, therefore, *the man*; the matchless and stupendous man; whose practice was a pattern of the most exalted virtue, and his person the mirror of every divine perfection. Examine the memoirs of his heavenly temper, and exemplary conversation. Contemplate that *choir* of *graces*, which were associated in his mind, and shed the highest lustre on all his actions. Familiarize to my thoughts his instructive discourses, and enter into the very spirit of his refined doctrines. That the graces may be transfused into thy breast, and the doctrines transcribed in thy life - - Follow him to *Calvary's* horrid eminence; to *Calvary's* fatal catastrophe. Where innocence, dignity, and merit, were *made perfect through sufferings:* each shining with all possible splendor, through the tragical scene; somewhat like his own radiant bow, then glowing with the greatest beauty, when appearing on the darkest cloud.—Be thy most constant attention fixed, on that lovely and sorrowful spectacle. Behold the spotless victim, nailed to the tree, and stabbed to the heart. Hear him pouring out prayers, for his murderers; before he poured out his soul, for transgressors. See the wounds, that stream with forgiveness, and *bleed balm* for a distempered world. O! see the justice of the Almighty and his goodness; his mercy and his vengeance; every *tremendous* and *gracious* attribute manifested; manifested with inexpressible glory, in that most *ignominious*, yet *grandest*, of transactions.

Since God is so inconceivably great, as these his marvellous works declare;

> Since the great Sov'reign sends ten thousand worlds,
> To tell us, He resides above them all,
> In glory's unapproachable recess;

how can we forbear hastening, with *Moses*, bowing ourselves to the earth, and worshipping?

O! what an honorable, as well as advantageous employ, is prayer!—*Advantageous.* By prayer, we cultivate that improving correspondence with JEHOVAH, we carry on that gladdening intercourse with his SPIRIT, which must begin here, in order to be completed in eternity.—*honorable.* By prayer, we have access to that mighty potentate; whose sceptre sways universal nature, and whose rich regalia fill the skies with lustre. Prayer, places us in his presence-chamber; while "the blood of sprinkling," procures us a gracious audience.

Shall I then *blush* to be found prostrate, before the throne of grace? shall I be *ashamed* to have it known; that I offer up social supplications in the family, or am conscientious in observing my private retirements? rather, let me glory in this unspeakable privelege. Let me reckon it my *noblest* posture, to fall low on my knees before his eternal God, and the *highest* honor to enjoy communion with his most exalted majesty. Incomparably more noble, than to sit in, person, on the triumphal chariot; or to stand, in effigy, amidst the temple of worthies.

Most inestimable, in such a view, is that promise; which so often occurs in the prophetic writings, and is the crowning benefit of the new covenant, *I will be thy God.** Will this supremely excellent, and Almighty Being, vouchsafe to be *my* portion? to settle upon a poor sinner, no the heritage of a county; not the possession of the whole earth; but his *own* ever-blessed *self*? may I then, through his free condescending grace, and the unknown merits of

* Heb viii 10

his Son, look upon all these infinitely noble attributes as my treasure? may I regard the *wisdom*, which superintends such a multitude of worlds, as my guide; the *power*, which produced, and preserves them in existence, as my guard; the *goodness*, which, by an endless communication of favours, renders them all so many habitations of happiness, as *my exceeding great reward?*—What a fund of felicity, is included in such a blessing! How often does the *Israelitish* Prince exult in the assurance, that this unutterable and boundless good is his own? interested in this, he bids defiance to every evil, that can be dreadful; and rests in certain expectation of every blessing, that can be desired. The *LORD is my light, and my salvation; whom then shall I fear? The LORD*, with an air of exultation, he repeats both his affiance, and his challenge, *is the strength of my life; of whom then shall I be afraid?*† Nothing so effectual, as the appropriating faith, to inspire a dignity of mind, superior to transitory trifles; or to create a calmness of temper, unalarmed by vulgar fears, unappalled by Death itself.—*The LORD is my shepherd*, says the same truly gallant and heroic personage: *therefore shall I lack nothing.*‡ How is it possible, he should suffer want, who has the all-sufficient fulness for his supply? so long as unerring wisdom is capable of contriving the means; so long as uncontroulable power is able to execute them; such a one cannot fail of being safe and happy; whether he continue amidst the vicissitudes of time, or depart into the unchangeable eternity.

Here, let us stand a moment, and humbly contemplate this great God, together with ourselves, in a relative view.—If we reflect on the works *material* nature, their number incomprehensible, and their extent unmeasurable: each of them apart, so admirably framed; the connections of the whole, so exquisitely regulated; and all derived, from one and the same glorious Agent.—If we recollect the far more noble accomplishments of elegant taste, and discerning judgment; of refined affections, and exalted

† Psal. xxvii. 1 ‡ Psal. xxiii. 1.

sentiments; which are to be found, among the several orders of *intelligent* existence: and all of them flowing, in rich, emanations from the one sole fountain of intellectual light.—If we farther consider this author of material beauty, and moral excellency, as a *guardian*, a *governor* and *benefactor* to all his creatures: supporting the whole system, and protecting each individual, by an ever watchful Providence; presiding over the minutest affairs, and causing all events to terminate in the most extensive good; heaping, with unremitted liberaliy, his benefits upon every capable object, and making the circuit of the universe a seminary of happiness—Is it possible for the human heart, under such captivating views, to be *indifferent* towards this most benign, most bountiful original of being and of bliss? can any be so immersed in stupidity, as to say unto the Almighty,—in the language of an irreligious temper, and licentious life, to say? " depart from us; we implore not " thy favour; nor desire the knowledge of thy ways."—Wonder, O *heavens!* be amazed, O *earth!* and let the inhabitants of *both* express their astonishment, at this unparalled complication of disingenous, ungrateful, destructive perverseness!

If we consider our *fallen* and *imperfect* state; frail in our bodies; enfeebled in our minds; in every part of our constitution, and in all the occurrences of life, like a tottering " wall, or a broken hedge."—If we survey our *indigent* and *infirm* state; without holiness; without spiritual strength; our possesion of pressent conveniencies, entirely dependant on God's sovereign pleasure; yea, forfeited, justly forfeited, with every future hope, by a thousand aggravated iniquities.—If we add the various *disasters* of our condition; agitated as we are by tumultuous passions; oppressed with dispiriting fears; held in suspense by a variety of perplexing cares: liable to pains, and exposed to troubles; troubles from every quarter; troubles of every kind—Can we, amidst so many wants, under such deplorable infirmities, and subject to such disastrous accidents—can we be unconcerned, whether God's omnipotent, irresistible, all-conducting hand be *against* us, or *for* us? Immagination it-

self shudders at the thought!—Can we rest satisfied, without a well-grounded persuasion, that we are *reconciled* to this supreme LORD, and the objects of this unchangeable goodness!—If there be an abandoned wretch, whose apprehensions are so fatally blinded; who is so utterly lost to all sense of his duty, and of his interest; let me bewail his *misery*, while I abhor his impiety. Bewail his misery; though popularity, with her choicest laurels, adorn his brow; though affluence, with her richest delicacies, load his table; though half a nation, or half a world, conspire to call him *happy*.

MAY I, by a believing application, solace myself in this everlasting source of love, perfection, and joy! Grant me this request, and I ask no more.—Only, that I may expect, not with a reluctant anxiety, but with a ready chearfulness, the arrival of that important hour; when this veil of flesh shall drop, and the shadows of mortality flee away. When I shall no longer complain of *obscure* knowledge; *languid* affections; and *imperfect* fruition—but shall see the uncreated and immortal Majesty. *See* him, not in this distant and unaffecting method, of reasoning from his works; but with the most clear and direct intuition of the mind.—When I shall *love* him, not with a cold and contracted spirit; but with the most lively and enlarged emotions of gratitude.—When I shall incessantly *enjoy* the light of his countenance; and be united, inseparably united, to his all-glorious GODHEAD.—Take, ye ambitious, unenvied and unopposed, take to yourselves the toys of state. May I be enabled to *rejoice* in this blessed hope; and to *triumph* in that amiable, that adorable, that delightful name, the LORD MY GOD! and I shall scarce bestow a thought, on the splendid pageantry of the world, unless it be to *despise* its empty pomp; and to *pity* its deluded admirers.

ALL these bodies, though immense in their size, and almost infinite in their multitude, are *obedient* to the divine command. The GOD of wisdom "telleth their numbers," "and is intimately acquainted with their various properties." "The GOD of power calleth them all by their names," and assigns them whatsoever office he pleases.—He *marshals*

all the starry legions, with infinitely greater ease, and nicer order; than the most expert general, arranges his disciplined troops. He appoints their *posts;* he marks their *route;* he fixes the time for their *return.* The posts, which he appoints, they occupy, without fail. In the route, which he settles, they persevere, without the least deviation. And to the instant, which he fixes for their return, they are precisely punctual.—He has given them a *law,* which, through a long revolution of ages, shall not be broken; unless his sovereign will interposes, for its *repeal.* Then indeed, the motion of the celestial orbs is controuled; their action remains suspended; or their influence receives a new direction.—The *sun,* at his creation, issued forth with a command, to travel perpetually through the heavens. Since which, he has never neglected to perform the great circuit; "rejoicing as a giant to run his race." But, when it is requisite to accomplish the purposes of divine love, the orders are countermanded; the flaming courier remits his career; *stands still in Gibeon;* and, for the conveniency of the chosen people, holds back the falling day.—The *moon* was dispatched with a charge, never to intermit her revolving course, till day and night come to an end. But when the children of Providence, are to be favoured with an uncommon continuance of light, she halts in her march; makes a solemn pause *in the valley of Ajalon;* and delays to bring on her attendant train of shadows.—When the enemies of the LORD are to be discomfited, the *stars* are levied into the service; the stars are armed, and take the field; *the stars, in their courses, fought against Sisera.*

So dutiful is material nature! so obsequious, in *all* her *forms,* to her Creator's pleasure!—The bellowing thunders, listen to his voice; and the vollied lightnings, observe the direction of his eye. The flying storm, and impetuous whirlwind, wear his yoke. The raging waves revere his nod: they shake the earth; they dash the skies; yet never offer to pass the limits, which he has prescribed.—Even the planetary spheres; though vastly *larger,* than this wide-extended earth; are in his hand, as *clay* in the hands of the potter. Though, *swifter* than the northern blast, they

sweep the long tracts of æther; yet, are they guided by his reins, and execute whatever he injoins.—All those enormous globes of *central* fire, which beam through the boundless azure; in comparison of which an army of planets, were like a swarm of summer insects; those, even those, are conformable to his will, as the *melting wax* to the impressed seal.—Since *all*, ALL is obedient, throughout the whole ascent of things, shall man be the *only rebel* against the Almighty Maker? Shall these unruly *appetites*, reject his Goverment, and refuse their allegiance? Shall these headstrong *passions*, break loose from divine restraint; and run wild, in exorbitant sallies, after their own imaginations?

O MY soul, be stung with remorse, and overwhelmed with confusion, at the thought! is it not a righteous thing, that the blessed GOD should sway the sceptre, with the most absolute authority, over all the creatures, which his power has formed? especially over those creatures, whom his distinguishing favour, has endued with the noble principle of reason, and made capable of a blissful immortality? sure; if all the ranks of inanimate existence, conform to their Maker's decree, by the *necessity* of their nature; this more excellent race of beings, should pay their equal homage, by the *willing* compliance of their affections.—Come then, all ye *faculties* of my *mind*; come, all ye *powers* of my *body*; give up yourselves, without a moment's delay, without the least reserve, to his Governance. Stand, like dutiful servants, at his footstool; in an everlasting readiness, to *do* whatsoever he requires; to *be* whatsoever he appoints. To further, with united efforts, the purposes of his glory in this earthly scene: or else to separate, without reluctance, at his summons; the *one*, to sleep in the silent dust; the *other*, to advance his honor, in some remoter colony of his kingdom.—Thus, may I join with all the works of the LORD, in all places of his dominion, to recognize his universal supremacy; and proclaim him sovereign of souls, as well as ruler of worlds.

AT my first coming abroad, all these luminaries were *eclipsed*, by the overpowering lustre of the sun. —THEY were all placed in the very same stations; and

played the same sprightly beams; yet, not one of them was seen. As the daylight wore away, and the sober shades advanced; *Hesperus*, who leads the starry train, disclosed his radiant forehead, and catched my eye. While I stood gazing on his bright and beautiful aspect, several of his attendants peeped through the blue curtains. Scarce had I turned to observe these fresh emanations of splendor; but others drop the veil; others stole into view. When lo! faster and more numerous, multitudes sprung from obscurity; they poured, in shining troops, and in sweet confusion, over all the Empyrean plain. Till the firmament seemed, like one vast constellation; and "a flood of glory burst from all "the skies."

Is not such the *rise*, and such the *progress* of a true *conversion*, in the prejudiced infidel, or inattentive sinner? during the period of his vainer years, a thousand interesting truths, lay utterly undiscovered; a thousand momentous concerns, were entirely disregarded. But, when divine grace dissipates the delusive glitter, which dazled his understanding, and beguiled his affections; then, he begins to discern, dimly to discern, the things which belong unto his peace. Some admonition of scripture, darts conviction into his soul; as the glimmering of a star, pierces the gloom of night.—Then, perhaps, another awful, or chearing text, impreses terror, or diffuses comfort. A *threatening* alarms his fears, or a *promise* awakens his hopes. This, possibly, is succeeded by some *afflicted* dispensation of Providence; and improved by some edifying and *instructive* conversation. All which is established, as to its continuance; and enlarged, as to its influence; by a diligent study of the sacred word.—By this means, new truths continually pour their evidence. Scenes of refined and exalted, but hitherto unknown delight. address him with their attractives. New desires take wing; new pursuits are set on foot. A new turn of mind forms his temper; a new habit of conversation regulates his life In a word; *old things are passed away; and all things become new.* He, who was sometime darkness, is now light, and life, and joy in the LORD.

THE more attentively I view the crystal concave, the more fully I discern the richness of its decorations. Abun-

dance of minuter lights, which lay concealed from a *superficial* notice, are visible on a *closer* examination. Especially in those tracts of the sky, which are called the *galaxy;* and are distinguishable, by a sort of milky path. There, the stars are crouded, rather than disseminated. The regions seems to be all on a blaze, with their blended rays.—Besides this vast profusion, which in my present situation the eye discovers; was I to make my survey, from any other part of the globe, lying nearer the southern pole; I should behold a *new choir* of starry bodies, which have never appeared within our horizon.—Was I (which is still more wonderful) either here or there, to view the firmament with the virtuoso's glass; I should find a prodigious multitude of flaming orbs, which, immersed in depths of æther, escape the keenest unassisted sight *—Yet, in these various situations; even with the aid of the telescopic tube; I should not be able to descry the half, perhaps not a *thousandth* part, of those majestic luminaries, which the vast expansive heavens contain.—So, the more diligently I pursue my search, into those oracles of eternal truth, the *scriptures;* I perceive a wider, a deeper, an ever increasing fund of spiritual treasures. I perceive the brighter strokes of wisdom, and the richer displays of goodness; a more transcendent excellency in the illustrious Messiah, and a more deplorable vileness in fallen man; a more immaculate purity in GOD's law; and more precious privileges in his gospel. Yet, after a course of study, ever so assiduous; ever so prolonged; I should have reason to own myself, a mere *babe* in heavenly knowledge; or, at most, but a *puerile* proficient, in the school of CHRIST.

AFTER all my most accurate inspection, those starry orbs appear but as *glittering points.* Even the planets, though so much nearer our earthly mansion, seem only like burn

* Come forth, O man, yon azure round survey,
And view those lamps, which yield eternal day.
Bring forth thy glasses, clear thy wond'ring eyes.
Millions beyond the former millions rise.
Look farther:—millions more blaze from remoter skies.

See an ingenious poem, entitled, " The Univers

ing *bullets*. If then, we have such *imperfect apprehensions* of visible and material things; how much more scanty and inadequate, must be our notions of invisible and immortal objects!—We behold the stars. Though every one is incomparably bigger, than the globe we inhabit; yet they dwindle, upon our survey, into the most diminutive forms. Thus, we see by faith the glories of the blessed JESUS; the atoning efficacy of his death; the justifying merit of his righteousness; and the joys, which are reserved for his followers. But alas! even our most *exalted* ideas, are vastly *below* the truth. As much below the truth; as the report, which our eyes make of those celestial edifices, is inferior to their real grandeur.—Should we take in all the *magnifying* assistances, of art; those luminous bodies, would elude our skill, and appear as *small* as ever. Should an inhabitant of earth, travel towards the cope of heaven; and be carried forwards, in his aerial journey, more than a hundred and sixty millions of miles; even in that advanced situation,, those *oceans* of *flame*, would look no larger, than *radiant specks*.—In like manner, conceive ever so magnificently, of the Redeemer's honors; and of the bliss, which he has purchased for his people; yet you will fall short. Raise your imagination *higher*; stretch your invention *wider*; give them *all* the scope, which a soaring and excursive fancy can take; still, your conceptions will be extremely *disproportionate*, to their genuine perfections.—Vast are the bodies, which roll in the expanse of heaven: vaster far are those fields of æther, through which they run their endless round: but the excellency of JESUS, and the happiness laid up for his servants, are greater then *either*; than *both*; than *all*. An inspired writer calls the former, " the unsearchable riches of CHRIST; and stiles the latter, " an exceeding great and eternal weight of glory."

IF those stars, are so many inexhaustible magazines o. fire, and immense *reservoirs* of light; there is no reason to doubt, but they have some very *grand uses*, suitable to the magnificence of their nature. To specify, or explain, the particular purposes they answer; is altogether impossible, in our present state of distance and ignorance. This, however, we may clearly discern; they are disposed in that

very manner, which is most *pleasing* and most *serviceable* to mankind.—They are not placed at an *infinite remove*, so as to lie beyond our sight; neither are they brought *so near* our abode, as to annoy us with their beams. We see them shine on every side. The deep azure, which serves them as a ground, heightens their splendor. At the same time, their influence is gentle, and their rays are destitute of heat. So that we are surrounded with a multitude of fiery globes, which beautify and illuminate the firmament, without any risque, either to the *coolness* of our night, or the *quiet* of our repose.—Who can sufficiently admire that wondrous benignity; which on our account, strews the *earth* with blessings of every kind; and vouchsafes to make the *very heavens*, subservient to our delight?

It is not solely to adorn the roof of our palace, with costly gildings; that God commands the celestial luminaries, to glitter through the gloom. We also reap considerble benefits, from their ministry.—They *divide* our *time*, and fix its solemn periods. They settle the *order* of our *works;* and are, according to the destinations mentioned in sacred writ, "for signs, and for seasons; for days, and for years." The returns of heat and cold alone, would have been too precarious a rule. But these radiant bodies; by the *variation*, and also by the *regularity*, of their motions; afford a method of calculating, absolutely certain, and sufficiently obvious. By this, the *farmer* is instructed, when to commit his grain to the furrows, and how to conduct the operations of husbandry. By this, the sailor knows when to proceed on his voyage, with least peril; and how to carry on the business of navigation, with most success.

Why should not the christian, the probationer for eternity, learn from the same monitors, to *number*—for nobler purposes, to number his *days;* and duly to transact the grand affairs of his everlasting salvation? Since God has appointed so many bright measurers of our time, to determine its larger periods, and to minute down its ordinary stages; sure, this most strongly inculcates its *value*, and should powerfully prompt us to *improve* it.—Behold! the supreme Lord marks the progress of our life, in that most conspicuous kalendar above. Does not such an ordination

tell us, and in the most emphatical language; that our life is given for *use*, not for *waste?* That no portion of it is delivered, but under a strict account; that all of it is entered, as it passes, in the divine register; and, therefore, that the stewards of such a talent, are to expect a future reckoning?—Behold! the very heavens are bid to be the *accomptants*, of our years, and months, and days. O! may this induce us to manage them, with a vigilant frugality; to part with them, as misers with their *hoarded treasure*, warily and circumspectly; and, if possible, as merchants with their *rich commodities*, not without an equivalent, either in personal improvement, or social usefulness!

How *bright* the starry diamonds shine! the ambition of Eastern monarchs could imagine no distinction, more noble and sublime, than that of being likened to those beaming orbs.*—They form night's *richest dress;* and sparkle upon her sable robe, like jewels of the finest lustre. Like jewels! I wrong their character. The lucid stone has no brilliancy; quenched is the flame even of the golden topaz; compared with those glowing decorations of heaven.—How widely are their radiant honours *diffused!* no nation so remote, but sees their beauty, and rejoices in their usefulness. They have been admired by all preceding generations; and every rising age, will gaze on their charms, with renewed delight.—How *animating*, then, is that promise, made to the faithful ministers of the gospel! "they that turn many to righteousness, shall shine as the stars for ever and "ever."† Is not this a most winning encouragement, "to spend and be spent," in the service of souls? Methinks, the stars beckon, as they twinkle. Methinks, they shew me their splendors, on purpose to inspire me with *alacrity*, in the race set before me; on purpose to enliven my *activity*, in the work that is given me to do.—Yes; ye ma-

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* Numb. xxiv. 17. Dan. viii. 10.

† Dan. xii. 3.

jestic monitors, I understand your meaning. If honor has any charms; if true glory, the glory which cometh from God, is any attractive; you display the most powerful incitements, to exercise all assiduity in my holy vocation. I will, henceforth, observe your intimation; and, when zeal becomes *languid*, have recourse to your heavenly lamps. If so be, I may *rekindle* its ardor, at those inextinguishable fires.

Of the *polar* star, it is observable; that, while other luminaries *alter* their situation, this seems invariably *fixed.* While other luminaries, now, mount the battlements of heaven, and appear upon duty; now, retire beneath the horizon and resign to a fresh set, the watches of the night; this never departs from its station. This, in every season maintains an uniform position; and is always to be found, in the same tract of the Northern sky.—How often has this beamed bright intelligence on the *sailor;* and conducted the keel, to its desirred haven! In early ages, those, who went down to the sea in ships, and occupied their business in great waters, had scarce any other sure guide for their wandering vessel. This therefore they viewed, with the most solicitous attention. By this, they formed their observations, and regulated their voyage. When this was obscured by clouds, or inveloped in mists; the trembling mariner was *bewildered,* on the watery waste. His thoughts fluctuated, as much as the floating surge; and he knew not, *where* he was advanced, or *whither* he should steer, but, when this auspicious star broke through the gloom; it dissipated the anxiety of his mind, and cleared up his dubious passage. He re-assumed, with alacrity, the management of the helm; and was able to shape his course, with some tollerable degree of satisfaction and certainty.

SUCH, only much clearer in its light, and much surer in its direction, is the *holy word* of God, to those myriads of intellectual beings, who are bound for the eternal shores. Who, embarked in a vessel of feeble flesh, are to pass the waves of this tempestuous and perilous world. In all *difficulties,* those sacred pages shed an encouraging ray; in all *uncertainties* they suggest the right determination, and

point out the proper procedure. What is still a more inestimable advantage; they, like the star which conducted the Eastern sages, make plain the way of access to a *Redeemer*. They display his unspeakable merits: they discover the method of being interested in his great atonement; and lead the weary soul, *tossed* by troubles, and *shattered* by temptations, to that only harbour of peaceful repose.—Let us, therefore, attend to this *unerring* directory, with the same constancy of regard, as the sea-faring man observes his compass. Let us become as thoroughly acquainted with this sacred chart, as the pilot is with every trusty mark, that gives notice of a lurking rock; and with every open road, that yields a safe passage into the port. Above all, let us commit ourselves to this infalliable guidance, with the same implicit resignation; let us conform our conduct to its exalted precepts, with the same sedulous care; as the children of *Israel*, when sojourning in the trackless desert, followed the pillar of fire, and the motions of the miraculous cloud.—So, will it introduce us, not into an earthly *Canaan*, flowing with milk and honey; but into an *immortal* paradise, where is the fulness of joy, and where are pleasures for evermore. It will introduce us into those happy, happy regions, where *our sun shall no more go down, nor our moon withdraw itself; for the LORD shall be our everlasting light, and the days of our mourning*, together with the fatigues of our pilgrimage, *shall be ended.**

I PERCEIVE a great *variety*, in the size and splendor of those gems of heaven. Some, are of the first magnitude; others, of an inferior order. Some *glow*, with intense flames; others *glimmer*, with fainter beams. Yet, *all* are beautiful; all have their peculiar lustre, and distinct use; all tend, in their different degrees, to enamel the cope of heaven, and embroider the robe of night.—This circumstance is remarked by an author, whose sentiments are a source of wisdom, and the very standard of truth. "One star, "says the apostle of the *Gentiles*, *differeth* from another "star in glory: *so* also is the resurrection of the dead."

* Isai. lx. 20

In the world above, are various *degrees* of happiness, various seats of honour. Some will rise to more illustrious distinctions, and richer joys. Some, like vessels of ample capacity, will admit more copious accessions of light and excellence. Yet, there will be no want, no deficiency, in any; but a fulness both of divine satisfactions, and personal perfections. *Each* will enjoy *all* the good; and be adorned with *all* the glory; that his heart can wish, or his condition receive —None will know what it is to envy. Not the least malevolence, nor the least selfishness, but everlasting friendship prevails, and a mutual complacency in each other's delight. Love, cordial love, will give every particular Saint, a participation of all the fruitions; which are diffused through the whole assembly of the blessed.— No one *eclipses*, but each *reflects light* upon his brother. A sweet interchange of rays subsist; all enlightened by the great fountain, and all enlightening one another. By which reciprocal communication of pleasure and amity, each will be continually *receiving from*, each incessantly *adding to*, the general felicity.

Happy, supremely happy they, who are admitted into the celestial mansions. Better to be a door-keeper in those "ivory palaces,"* than to fill the most gorgeous throne on earth. The very lowest place at God's right-hand, is distinguished honour, and consummate bliss.—O! that we may, in some measure, anticipate that beatific state, while we remain in our banishment below! May we, *by rejoicing* in the superior prosperity of another, make it *our own!* and, provided the general result is harmony, be content, be pleased, with whatsoever part is assigned to our share, in the universal choir of affairs.

While I am considering the heavenly bodies, I must not intirely forget those fundamental laws of our modern astronomy, *projection* and *attractive*. One of which is the all-combining cement, the other is the ever-operative spring, of the mighty frame.—In the beginning, the all-creating Fiat impressed a proper degree of motion, on each of those

* Psal. xlv. 8.

whirling orbs. Which, if not controuled, would have carried them on, in strait lines, and to endless lengths; till they were even lost, in the abyss of space. But, the *gravitating* property, being added to the *projectile* force, determined their courses to a *circular* form; and obliged the reluctant rovers, to perform their destined rounds.—Were either of those causes to suspend their action, all the harmoniously moving spheres would be disconcerted. Would degenerate into sluggish inactive masses; and falling into the central fire, be *burnt* to ashes. Or else, would exorbitate into wild confusion; and each, by the rapidity of its whirl, be *dissipated* into atoms. But, the impulsive and attractive energy, being most nicely attempered to each other; and, under the immediate operation of the Almighty, exerting themselves in perpetual concert; the various globes run their radiant races, without the least interruption or the least deviation. So as to create the alternate changes of *day* and *night*; and distribute the useful vicissitudes of *succeeding* seasons. So as to answer all the great ends of a gracious Providence; and procure every comfortable convenience, for universal nature.

Does not this constitution of the material, very naturally lead the thoughts, to those grand principles of the moral and devotional world, *faith* and *love*?—These are often celebrated by the inspired apostle, as a comprehensive summary of the gospel.* These inspirit the beast, and regulate the progress, of each private christain. These unite the whole congregation of the faithful to God, and one another. To God, the great centre, in the bonds of gratitude and devotion; to one another, by a reciprocal intercourse of brotherly affections, and friendly offices. If you ask; why is it impossible for the true believer, to live at all adventures? to *stagnate* in sloth, or habitually to *deviate* from duty?—We answer, it is owing to "his faith, work "ing by love." He assuredly trusts, that Christ has sustained the infamy, and endured the torment, due to his sins. He firmly relies on that divine propitation, for the pardon

* Col. i. 4. Philem. ver. 5.

of all his guilt; and humbly expects everlasting salvation, as the purchase of his Saviour's merits. This produces such a spirit of gratitude, as refines his inclinations, and animates his whole behaviour. He cannot, he cannot run to excess of riot; because love to his adorable Redeemer, like a strong, but silken *curb*, sweetly restrains He cannot, he cannot lie lulled in a lethargic indolence; because love to the same infinite Benefactor, like a pungent, but endearing *spur*, pleasingly excites him.—In a word; faith supplies the powerful impulse, while love gives the determining biass; and leads the willing feet, through the whole circle of God's commandments. By the united efficacy of these *heavenly graces*, the christian conduct is preserved, in the uniformity and beauty of holiness; as by the blended power of those *Newtonian principles*, the solar system revolves, in a steady and magnificent regularity.

How admirable, how extensive, how diversified, is the force of this single principle, *attraction!* †—This penetrates the very essence of all bodies, and diffuses itself to the remotest limits of the mundane system.—By this, the worlds impressed with motion, hang *self-balanced* on their centres; and though orbs of immense magnitude, require nothing, but this amazing property, for their support.—To this we ascribe a phænomenon, of a very different kind, the *pressure* of the atmosphere. Which, though a yielding and expansive fluid; yet constipated by an attractive energy; surrounds the whole globe, and encloses every creature, as it were with a tight bandage. An expedient this, absolutely necessary to preserve the texture of our bodies; and indeed, to maintain every species of animal existence. —Attraction! Urged by this wonderful impetus, the *rivers* circulate, copious and unintermitted, among all the nations of the earth; sweeping with rapidity down the steeps, or softly ebbing through the plains. Impelled by the same mysterious force, the *nutricious juices* are detached from the soil; and, ascending the trees, find their way through millions of the finest meanders, in order to transfuse vegetable

† I mean the attraction both of *gravitation* and *cohesion*.

life into all the branches. This confines the *ocean*, within proper bounds. Though the waves thereof roar; though they toss themselves, with all the madness of indignant rage; yet, checked by this potent, this inevitable curb, they are unable to pass even the slight barrier of sand. To this the *mountains* owe that unshaken firmness, which laughs at the shock of careering winds; and bids the tempest, with all its mingled horrors, impotently rave.—By virtue of this invisible mechanism; without the aid of crane or pulley, or any instrument of human device; many thousand tons of water are *raised*, every moment, into the regions of the firmament. By this, they continue *suspended* in thin air, without any capacious cistern, to contain their substance; or any massy pillars, to sustain their weight. By this same variously acting power, they return to the place of their native residence; *distilled* in gentle falls of dew, or *precipitated* in impetuous showers of rain. They *slide* into the fields in fleecy flights of snow, or are *darted* upon the houses in clattering storms of hail.—This occasions the strong *cohesion* of solid bodies. Without which, our large machines could exert themselves with no vigour; and the nicer utensils of life, would elude our expectations of service. This affords a foundation for all those delicate or noble mechanic arts; which furnish mankind with numberless conveniencies, both of ornament and delight.—In short; this is the prodigious *ballast*, which composes the equilibrium, and constitutes the stability of things: this, the great *chain*, which forms the connections of universal nature; and the mighty *engine*, which prompts, facilitates, and, in good measure, accomplishes all her operations.—What *complicated* effects, from a *single* cause! What profusion, amidst frugality! an unknown profusion of benefits, with the utmost frugality of expense!

And what *is* this attraction? it is a quality, in its existence, inseparable from matter; and, in its acting, independent on the DEITY!—Quite the reverse. It is the very *finger* of God: the constant impression of divine power: a principle, neither innate in matter, nor intelligible by mortals.--Does it not, however, bear a considerable analogy to the *agency* o the HOLY GHOST, in the chris-

tian œconomy? Are not the gracious operations of the blessed Spirit, thus *extensive*, thus *admirable*, thus *various*? That Almighty Being transmits his gifts, through every age: and communicates his graces, to every adherent on the Redeemer. All, either of illustrious memory, or of beneficial tendency; in a word, "all the good that is done "upon earth, he doth it himself." Strong in *his* aid, and in the power of *his* might, the saints of all times, have trod vice under their feet; have triumphed over this abject world; and conversed in heaven, while they dwelt on earth. *Not I, but the grace of GOD which was with me*,* is the unanimous acknowledgment of them all.—By the same kindly succours, the whole Church is still enlightened, quickened, and governed. Through his benign influences, the scales of *ignorance*, fall from the understanding; the leprosy of *evil* concupiscence, is purged from the will; and the fetters, the more than adamantine fetters of *habitual* iniquity, drop off from the conversation. He breathes even upon dry bones,† and they live: they are animated with faith; they pant with ardent and heavenly desire; they exercise themselves in all the duties of godliness.—His real, though secret, inspiration, dissolves the flint in the impenitent breast; and binds up the sorrows, of the broken heart. Raises the thoughts high, in the elevations of holy hope; yet lays them low, in the humiliations of inward abasement. *Steels* the soul with impenetrable resolution, and persevering fortitude; at the same time, *softens* it into a Dove-like meekness, and *melts* it in penitential sorrow.

When I contemplate those ample and magnificent structures, erected over all the ætherëal plains:—When I look upon them as so many splendid repositories of light, or fruitful abodes of life:—When I remember, that there may be other orbs, vastly more remote, than those which appear to our unaided sight; orbs, whose effulgence, though travelling ever since the Creation, is not yet arrived upon our

* 1 Cor. xv. 10.

† See that beautiful piece of sacred and allegorical imagery displayed, *Ezek.* xxxvii.

coasts:*—when I stretched my thoughts to the innumerable orders of Being, which inhabit all those spacious systems; from the *loftiest seraph,* to the lowest reptile; from the armies of angels, which surround the throne of JEHOVAH; to the *puny nations,* which tinge with blue the surface of the plum, or mantle the standing pool with green:—how various appear the links, in this immense chain! How vast the gradations, in this universal scale of existence! Yet all these, though ever so vast and various, are the *work* of GOD's hand, and are full of his *presence.*

He rounded in his palm those dreadfully large globes, which are pendulous in the vault of heaven. He kindled those astonishingly bright fires, which fill the firmament with a flood of glory. By him they are suspended in *fluid* æther, and cannot be shaken: by him they dispense a *perpetual* tide of beams, and are never exausted.—He formed, with inexpressible nicety, that delicately fine collection of tubes; that unknown multiplicity of subtile springs; which organize, and actuate, the frame of the minutest insect. He bids the crimson current roll; the vital movements play; and associates a world of wonders, even in an *animated point.*—In all these, is a signal exhibition of creating power; to all these, are extended, the special regards

* If this conjecture (which has no less a person than the celebrated Mr *Huygens* for its author) concerning *unseen stars* be true—if, to this observation, be added, what is affirmed by our skilful astronomers; that the motion of the rays of light is so *amazingly swift,* as to pass through ten millions of miles in a single minute—how vast; beyond imagination vast and unmeasurable, are the spaces of the universe!—While the mind is distended with the *grand idea;* or rather, while she is dispatching [illegible] utmost powers of piercing judgment, and excursive fancy; and finds them all [illegible] baffled by the amazing subject: permit me to apply that spirited exclamation, and noble remark——

——Say, proud arch,
Built with divine ambition; in disdain
Of limit built; built in the taste of heav'n!
Vast concave! ample dome! wast thou design'd
A *meet* apartment for the DEITY?
Not so: that thought alone thy state impairs.
Thy *lofty* sinks; and shallows thy *profound;*
And streightens thy *diffusive.*——

Night Thoughts, No IX.

of preserving goodness. From hence, let me learn to rely on the Providence, and to revere the presence, of the supreme Majesty.

To *rely* on his *Providence.*——For, amidst that inconceivable number and variety of beings, which swarm through the regions of creation, not one is overlooked, not one is neglected, by the great omnipotent cause of all.—However inconsiderable in its character, or diminutive in its size, it is still the production of the universal maker, and belongs to the family of the Almighty Father.——What? though enthroned archangels, enjoy the *smiles* of his *countenance!* yet, the low inhabitants of earth, the most despicable worms of the ground, are not excluded from his *providential care.* Though the manifestation of his perfections, is vouchsafed to holy and intellectual essences; his ear is open, to the cries of the young raven. His eye is attentive, to the wants, and to the welfare of the very meanest births of nature.—How much less then, are his own people disregarded? Those, for whom he has delivered his beloved Son to Death, and for whom he has prepared habitations of eternal joy. *They* disregarded! No. THEY are " kept as the apple of an eye." The very hairs of their head are all numbered. The fondest mother may *forget* the infant, that is " dandled upon her knees," and sucks at her breast; much sooner than the Father of everlasting compassions can *discontinue*, or *remit*, his watchful tenderness to his people—his children—his heirs.

LET this teach me also a more lively sense of the *Divine presence.*—All the rolling worlds above; all the living atoms below; together with all the beings that intervene, betwixt these wide extremes: are vouchers for an ever-present Deity. " GOD has not left himself without witness." The marks of his footsteps are evident in every place, and the touches of his finger distinguishable in every creature. *Thy* " *name is so nigh,* O thou all-supporting, all-informing " LORD; *and that do thy wondrous works declare.** Thy " goodness warms in the morning sun, and refreshes in the

* Psal. lxxv. 2.

" evening breeze. Thy glory shines in the lamps of mid" night, and smiles in the blossoms of spring. We see a " *trace* of thy incomprehensible grandeur, in the *bound*" *less* extent of things; and a *sketch* of thy exquisite skill, " in those almost " *evanescent* sparks of life, the insect race."—How stupid is this heart of mine, that amidst such a multitude of remembrancers, thronging on every side, I should forget thee a single moment! grant me, thou great I AM; thou source, and support, of universal existence—O! grant me an enlightened eye, to *discern* thee in every object; and a devout heart, to *adore* thee on every occasion. Instead of living without God in the world; may I be ever with him, and see all things full of him!

The glitt'ring stars,
By the deep ear of meditation heard,
Still in their midnight watches sing of HIM.
He nods a calm. The tempest blows his wrath.
The thunder in his voice; and the red flash
His speedy sword of justice. At his touch
The mountains flame. He shakes the solid earth,
And rocks the nations. Nor in these alone,
In *ev'ry common instance* GOD is seen.

THOMPSON'S *Spring*.

If the beautiful spangles, with a clear night pours on the beholder's eye: if those other fires, which beam in remoter skies; and are discoverable only by, that revelation to the sight, the telescope: if all those *bright millions*, are so many fountains of day; enriched with native and independent lustre; illuminating planets, and enlivening systems of their own:* What pomp, how majestic and splendid,

Consult with reason, reason will reply,
Each *lucid point*, which glows in yonder sky,
Informs a *system* in the boundless space,
And fills, with glory, its appointed place:
With beams unborrow'd, brightens other skies;
And worlds, to thee unknown, with heat and life supplies.

The Universe

is disclosed in the midnight scene! What *riches* are disseminated through all those numberless provinces of the great JEHOVAH's empire!—Grandeur beyond expression!—Yet, there is not the meanest slave, but carries *greater* wealth in his own bosom, possesses *superior* dignity in his own person. The *soul*, that informs his clay;—the soul, that teaches him to think, and enables him to choose; that qualifies him to relish rational pleasure, and to breathe sublime desire;*—the soul, that is endowed with such noble faculties; and, above all, is distinguished with the *dreadful*, the *glorious* capacity, of being pained, or blessed, for ever—this soul surpasses in worth, whatever the eye can see; whatever, of material, the fancy can imagine. Before one such intellectual being, all the treasure, and all the magnificence of unintelligent Creation, becomes poor and contemptible. For this soul, omnipotence itself has waked, and worked, through every age. To *convince* this soul, the fundamental laws of nature have been controuled; and the most amazing miracles, have alarmed all the ends of the earth. To *instruct* this soul, the wisdom of heaven has been transfused into the sacred page; and missionaries have been sent from the great King, who resides in light unapproachable. To *sanctify* this soul, the Almighty Comforter takes the wings of a dove; and, with [illegible] regenerating influence, broods on the human heart. And O! to *redeem* this soul from guilt; to rescue it from hell; the heaven of heavens was bowed, and GOD himself came down to dwell in dust.

LET me pause, a while, upon this important subject.—What are the schemes, which engage the attention of eminent statesmen, and mighty monarchs, compared with the grand interests of an immortal soul. The support of commerce, and the success of armies, though extremely weighty affairs; yet if laid in the balance against the salvation of a soul, are lighter than the downy feather, poised against talents of gold! To save a navy from *shipwreck*, or a

* In *this* respect, [illegible] soul even of [illegible] race, has an [illegible] estionable greatn[illegible]

kingdom from *slavery*, are deliverences of the most momentous nature, which the transactions of mortality can admit. But O! how they shrink into an inconsiderable trifle, if (their aspect upon immortality forgot) they are set in competition with the delivery of a single soul, from the anguish and horrors of a *distressed eternity!**

Is such the importance of the soul! what vigilance then can be *too much;* or rather what holy solicitude can be *sufficient;* for the overseers of the saviour's flock and the guardians of this great, this venerable, this invaluable charge?—Since, such is the importance of the soul; wilt thou not, O man, be watchful for the preservation of thy own? Shall every casual incident, awaken thy concern; every transitory toy, command thy regard? and shall the welfare of thy soul, a work of continual occurrence: a work of endless consequence; sue in vain, for thy serious care?—Thy soul, thy soul, is thy all. If this be *secured,* thou art greatly rich, and wilt be unspeakably happy. If this be *lost,* a whole world acquired, will leave thee in poverty; and all its delights enjoyed, will abandon thee to misery.

I HAVE oftens been charmed, and awed at the sight of the nocturnal heavens; even before I knew how to consider them, in their proper circumstances of majesty and beauty. *Something,* like *magic,* has struck my mind, on a transient and unthinking survey of the æthereal vault; tinged throughout with the purest azure, and decorated with innumerable starry lamps. I have felt, I know not what, powerful and aggrandizing impulse; which seemed to snatch me from the low entanglements of vanity, and prompted an ardent sigh for *sublimer objects.* Methought, I heard, even from the silent spheres, a commanding call, to spurn the abject earth, and pant after unseen delights.—Hencefor ward, I hope to imbibe more copiously, this *moral emanation* of the skies; when, in some such manner as the

* Not all you luminaris quench'd at once
Were half so sad, as one benighted mind,
Which gropes for happiness, and meets despair.

Night Thoughts, No. IX.

preceding, they are rationally seen, and the sight is duly improved. The stars, I trust, will *teach* as well as *shine;* and help to dispel, both nature's glooms, and my intellectual darkness. To some people, they discharge no better a service, than that of holding a flambeau to their feet, and softening the horrors of their night. To me and my friends, may they act as ministers of a superior order; as counsellors of wisdom, and guides to happiness! Nor will they fail to execute this noble office, if they gently light our way, into the knowledge of their adored Maker; if they point out, with their silver rays, our path to his beatific presence.

I gaze, I ponder. I ponder, I gaze; and think ineffable things.—I roll an eye of awe and admiration, Again and again I repeat my ravished views; and can never satiate either my curiosity, or my enquiry. I spring my thoughts into this immense field, till even fancy tires upon her wing. I find wonders, *ever new;* wonders, more and *more amazing.*—Yet, after all my present inquiries, what a mere *nothing* do I know; by all my future searches, how *little* shall I be able to learn; of those vastly distant suns, and their circling retinue of worlds! could I pry with *Newton's* piercing sagacity, or launch into his extensive surveys: even then, my apprehensions would be little better, than those dim and scanty images, which the *mole,* just emerged from her cavern, receives on her feeble optic.—This, sure, should repress all impatient or immoderate ardor to pry into the secrets of the starry structures; and make me more particulary careful, to cultivate my heart. To fathom the depths of the Divine essence; or to scan universal nature, with a critical exactness; is an attempt, which sets the *acutest philosopher,* very nearly on a level with *the idiot.* Since it is almost, if not altogether, as impracticable by the former, as by the latter.

Be it, then, my chief study, not to pursue, what is absolutely unattainable; but rather to seek, what is obvious to find; easy to be acquired; and of inestimable advantage, when possessed. O! let me seek *that charity,* which edifieth; *that faith,* which purifieth. Love, humble love, not conceited science, keeps the door of heaven. Faith, a

child-like faith in JESUS; not the haughty self-sufficient spirit, which scorns to be ignorant of any thing; presents a key* to those abodes of bliss.—This present state, is the sçene destined to the *exercise* of *devotion*; the invisible world, is the place appointed for the *enjoyment* of *knowledge.* There, the dawn of our infantile minds, will be advanced to the maturity of persect daya; or rather, there our midnight shades, will be brightened into all the lustre of noon. There, the souls which come from the school of faith and bring with them the principles of love, will dwell in light itself; will be obscured with no darkness at all; will know, even as they are known.†—Such an acquaintance, therefore, do I desire to form, and to carry on such a correspondence, with the heavenly bodies; as may shed a benign influence on the seeds of grace, implanted in my breast.—Let the exalted tracts of the firmament, sink my soul into *deep humiliation.* Let those eternal fires, kindle in my heart an *adoring gratitude*, to their Almighty Sovereign. Let yonder ponderous and enormous globes, which rest on his supporting arm, teach me an *unshaken affiance*, in their incarnate Maker. Then shall I be—if not wise as the astronomical adept, yet WISE UNTO SALVATION.

HAVING now walked and worshiped, in this *universal temple*, that is arched with skies emblazed with stars; and extended even to immensity—having cast an eye, like the inraptured partriarch;‡ an eye of *reason* and *devotion*, through the magnificent scene. With the former, having discovered an infinitude of worlds; and with the latter, having met the deity in every view—Having beheld, as *Moses* in the flaming bush, a *glimpse* of JEHOVAH's excellencies! reflected from the several planets, and streaming from myriads of celestial luminaries—Having read various

The righteousness of CHRIST. This is what MILTON beautifully stiles;

——— The golden key,
That opes the palace of eternity.

† Cor. XIII. 12.

‡ Gen. XV. 5.

lessons, in that stupendous *book of wisdom,** where unmeasurable sheets of azure compose the page; and orbs of radiance write, in everlasting characters, a *comment* on our creed—What remains, but that I close the midnight solemnity, as our Lord concluded his grand sacramental institution with a *song* of *praise*?—And behold a hymn, suited to the sublime occasion; indited by inspiration itself; transferred into our language, by† one of the happiest efforts of human ingenuity.

The spacious firmament on high,
With all the blue ethereal sky,
And spangled heav'ns a shining frame,
Their great original proclaim:
Th' unweary'd sun from day to day,
Does his Creator's pow'r display:
And publishes, to ev'ry land,
The work of an Almighty hand.

Soon as the ev'ning shades prevail,
The moon takes up the wond'rous tale:
And nightly, to the list'ning earth,
Repeats the story of her birth:
While all the stars, that round her burn,
And all the planets in their turn,
Confirm the tidings as they roll,
And spread the truth from pole to pole.

What though, in solemn silence, all
Move round the dark terrestrial ball?
What though, nor real voice nor sound
Amid their radiant orbs be found?
In reason's ear they all rejoice,
And utter forth a glorious voice,
For ever singing, as they shine,
The hand that made us, is divine.

* —— For heaven
Is as *the book of* God before thee set,
Wherein to read his wond'rous works.——Milton.

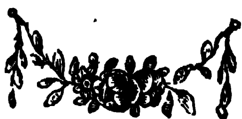
† Addison, *Spect.* Vol. VI. No. 465.

A

WINTER-PIECE.

"Storms and tempests may *calm* the soul—snow and ice be taught to *warm* the heart, and praise the Creator."

Anonymous Letter to the Author.



A WINTER-PIECE.

'TIS true, in the delightful seasons, HIS tenderness and HIS love, are most eminently displayed.—In the *vernal* months, all is beauty to the eye, and music to the ear. The clouds drop fatness, the air softens into balm; and flowers, in rich abundance, spring where-ever we tread, bloom where-ever we look.—Amidst the burning heats of *summer*, HE expands the leaves, and thickens the shades. He spreads the cooling arbor, to receive us; and awakens the gentle breeze, to fan us. The Moss swells into a couch, for the repose of our bodies; while the rivulet softly rolls, and sweetly murmers, to sooth our imagination. —In *autumn*, HIS bounty covers the fields, with a profusion of nutrimental treasure; and bends the boughs, with loads of delicious fruit. He furnishes his hospitable board with present plenty, and prepares a copious magazine for future wants.—But, is it *only* in these smiling periods of the year, that GOD, the all-gracious GOD is seen? Has *winter*, stern winter, no tokens of his presence? Yes: all things are eloquent of his praise, "His way is in the whirlwind." Storms and tempests fulfil his word, and extol his power. Even piercing frosts bear witness to his goodness; while they bid the shivering nations, tremble at his wrath.—Be winter, then, for a while, our theme. Perhaps, those *barren* scenes, may be *fruitful* of intellectual improvement. Perhaps, that rigorous cold, which binds the earth in icy chains; may serve to enlarge our hearts, and warm them with holy love.

See! how the *day* is *shortened!*—The, sun detained in fairer climes, or engaged in more agreeable services, rises, like an unwilling visitant, with tardy and reluctant steps. He walks, with a shy indifference along the edges of the Southern sky; casting an oblique glance, he just looks upon our dejected world; and scarcely scatters light, through the thick air. Dim is his appearance, languid are his gleams, while he continues. Or, if he chance to wear a brighter aspect, and a cloudless brow; yet, like the young and gay in the house of mourning, he seems uneasy, till he is gone; is in haste to depart.—And let him depart Why should we wish for his longer stay; since he can shew us nothing, but the Creation in distress? The flowery families lie dead, and the tuneful tribes are struck dumb. The trees, stript of their verdure, and lashed by storms, spread their naked arms to the enraged and relentless heavens. Fragrance no longer floats in the air; but chilling damps hover, or cutting gales blow. Nature, divested of all her beautiful robes, sits, like a forlorn disconsolate widow, in her weeds. While winds, in doleful accents, howl; and rains, in repeated showers, weep.

We regret not, therefore, the speedy departure of the day. When the room is hung with *funeral black*, and dismal objects are all around; who would desire to have the *glimmering taper* kept alive? Which can only discover spectacles of sorrow; can only make the horror vissible.—And, since this mortal life is little better than a continual conflict with sin, or an unremitted struggle with misery, is it not a *gracious* ordination, which has reduced our age to a *span?* Fourscore years of trial, for the virtuous, are sufficiently long; and more than such a term, allowed to the wicked, would render them beyond all measure, vile; our way to the kingdom of Heaven, lies through tribulations. Shall we then *accuse*, shall we not rather *bless*, the Providence, which has made the passage short? Soon, we cross the vale of tears; and then arrive on the happy hills, where light for ever shines, where joy for ever smiles.

Sometimes, the day is rendered shorter still; is almost blotted out from the year. The vapours gather, they

thicken into an impenetrable gloom; and obscure the face of the sky. At length, the *rains* descend. The sluices of the firmament are opened; and the low hung clouds pour their congregated stores. Copious and unintermitted, still they pour; and still are unexausted. The waters drop incessantly from the eaves, and rush in rapid streams from these spouts. They roar along the channelled pavements, and stand in foul shallows amidst the village-streets. Now, if the inattentive eye, or negligent hand, has left the roof but scantily covered; the insinuating element finds its way into every flaw, and oozing through the Ceiling, at once upbraids and chastises the careless inhabitants. The ploughman, soaked to the skin, leaves his half-tilled acre. The poor poultry, dripping with wet, croud into shelter. The tenants of the bough fold up their wings, afraid to launch into the streaming air. The beasts, joyless and dispirited, ruminate under their sheds. The roads swim, and the brooks swell.—The *river,* amidst all this watery ferment, long contained itself within its appointed bounds. But, swollen by innumerable currents; and roused, at last, into uncontroulable rage; bursts over its banks; shoots into the plain; bears down all opposition; spreads itself far and wide; and buries the meadow under a brown, sluggish, soaking *deluge.*

How happy for man, that this inundation comes, when there are no flowery crops in the valley, to be overwhelmed; nor fields standing thick with corn, to be laid waste! At *such* a juncture, it would have been *ruin* to the husbandman and his family: but, *thus* timed, it yields *manure* for his ground, and promises him *riches* in reversion.—How often, and how long, has the Divine Majesty bore with the most injurious affronts from sinners! his goodness triumphed over their perverseness, and graciously refused to be exasperated. But, O presumptuous creatures, multiply no longer your provocations. Urge not, by repeated iniquities, the Almighty arm to strike; lest his long-suffering cease, and his fierce anger break forth; break forth like a *flood of waters,** and sweep you away, into irrecoverable and everlasting perdition.

* Hos. v. 10.

How mighty! how majestic! and O! how mysterious are thy works, Thou GOD of heaven, and LORD of nature! when the air is calm, where sleep the *stormy winds?* in what chambers are they reposed, or in what dungeons confined! till thou art pleased to awaken their rage, and throw open their prison-doors. Then, with irresistible impetuosity they fly forth, scattering dread, and menacing destruction.

THE atmosphere is hurled into the most tumultuous confusion. The aereal torrent bursts its way over mountains, seas, and continents. All things feel the dreadful shock. All things tremble before the furious blast. The *forests*, vexed and tore, groans under the scourge. Her sturdy sons are strained to the very root, and almost sweep the soil, they were wont to shade. The stubborn oak, that disdains to bend, is dashed headlong to the ground: and, with shattered arms, with prostrate trunk, blocks the road.—While the flexile reed, that springs up in the marsh, yielding to the gust (as the *meek* and pliant temper, to injuries; or the *resigned* and patient spirit, to misfortunes;) eludes the force of the storm, and survives amidst the wide-spread havock.

FOR a moment, the turbulent and outrageous sky, seems to be assuaged: but, it intermits its wrath, only to increase its strength. Soon, the sounding squandrons of the air return to the attack, and renew their ravages with redoubled fury. The stately dome rocks, amidst the wheeling clouds. The impregnable tower totters on its basis; and threatens to overwhelm, whom it was intended to protect. The ragged rock is rent in pieces;* and even the hills, the perpetual hills, on their deep foundations, are scarcely secure. —Where, now, is the place of safety? when the *city* reels, and houses become heaps! sleep affrighted flies. Diversion is turned into horror. All is uproar in the element; all is consternation among mortals; and nothing, but one wide scene of rueful devastation, through the land.—Yet, this is only an *inferior* minister of divine displeasure.

* 1 Kings xix. 11.

The executioner of *milder* indignation. How then,—O! *how will the lofty looks of man be humbled, and the haughtiness of man be bowed down*; when the LORD GOD Omnipotent shall *meditate* terror—when he shall set *all* his terrors in array—when he arises, to judge the nations, and to *shake terribly* the earth!

The *ocean* swells with tremendous commotions. The ponderous waves are heaved from their capacious bed, and almost lay bare the unfathomable deep. Flung into the most rapid agitation, they sweep over the rocks; they lash the lofty cliffs; and toss themselves into the clouds. Natives are rent from their anchors; and, with all their enormous load, are whirled, swift as the arrow, wild as the winds, along the vast abyss.—Now, they climb the rolling mountains; they plow the frightful ridge; and seem to skim the skies. Anon, they plunge into the opening gulf; they lose the sight of day; and are lost themselves to every eye. How vain is the pilot's art! how impotent the mariner's strength! they reel to and fro, and stagger in the jarring hold; or cling to the cordage, while bursting seas foam over the deck. *Despair* is in every face, and *Death* sits threatening on every surge.—But why, O ye astonished mariners, why should you abandon yourselves to despair? Is the LORD's hand *shortened*, because the waves of the sea rage horibly? is his ear *deafended*, by the roaring thunders, and the bellowing tempest? Cry, cry unto HIM, who "holdeth the winds in his fist, and the "waters in the hollow of his hand." HE is all-gracious, to hear; and almighty, to save. If HE command, the storm shall be hushed to silence: the billows shall subside into a calm: the lightnings shall lay their fiery bolts aside: and, instead of sinking in a watery grave, you shall find yourselves brought to the desired haven.

Sometimes, after a joyless day, a more dismal *night* succeeds.—The lazy, louring vapours had wove so thick a veil, as the meridian sun could scarcely penetrate. What gloom then must overwhelm the nocturnal hours! the moon withdraws her shining. Not a single star, is able to struggle through the deep arrangement of shades. All is *pitchy darkness*, without one enlivening ray. How

solemn! how awful! 'Tis like the shroud of nature, or the return of chaos. I don't wonder, that it is the parent of terrors, and so apt to engender melancholy.—Lately, the tempest marked its rapid way with *mischief;* now, the night dresses her silent pavilion with *horror.*

I HAVE *sometimes* left the beaming tapers, with-drawn from the ruddy fire, and plunged into the thickest of these sooty shades; without regretting the change, rather exulting in it as a welcome deliverance. The very gloom was pleasing, was exhilarating, compared with the conversation, I quitted. The speech of my companions (how does it grieve me, that I should *even once* have occasion to call them by that name!) was the language of darkness: was horror to the soul, and torture to the ear.—*Their teeth were spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword,* to stab and assassinate, their neighbour's character. *their throat was an open sepulchre,* gaping to devour the reputation of the innocent, or tainting the air with their virulent and polluted breath.—Sometimes, their licentious and ungovernable discourse, shot arrows of *profaneness* against heaven itself; and, in proud defiance, challenged the resentment of Omnipotence.—Sometimes, as if it was the glory of human nature, to cherish the *grossest* appetites of the brute; or the mark of a gentleman, to have served an Apprenticeship in a Brothel; the filthiest jests of the stews (if low *obscenity* can be a jest) were nauseously obtruded on the company. All the *modest* part were offended and grieved; while the other besotted creatures laughed aloud, though the leprosy of uncleanness appeared on their lips.—Are not these persons *prisoners* of *darkness;* though blazing sconces, pour artificial day, through their rooms? are not their souls immured in the most baleful shades; though the noon-tide sun is brightened, by flaming on their gilded chariots?—They discern not that great and adorable Being, who fills the universe with his infinite and glorious presence: who is *all eye,* to observe their actions; *all ear,* to examine their words. They know not the all-sufficient Redeemer, nor the unspeakable blessedness of his heavenly kingdom. They are groping for the prize of happiness; but will certainly grasp the thorn of anxiety. They

are wantonly sporting on the brink of a precipice; and are every moment in danger of falling headlong into *irretrievable* ruin, and *endless* despair.

THEY have forced me out, and are, perhaps, deriding me in my absence: charging my reverence for the ever-present GOD, and my concern for the dignity of our *rational* nature, to the account of humour and singularity; to narrowness of thought, or sourness of temper.—Be it so — I will indulge no indignation against them. If any thing like it *should* arise, I will convert it into prayer—" Pity " them, O thou Father of mercies!—Shew them the mad- " ness of their profaneness!—Shew them the baseness of " their vile ribaldry! Ler their dissolute rant be turned " into silent sorrow and confusion. Till they open their " lips, to adore thine *insulted* Majesty, and to implore thy " gracious pardon. Till they devote to thy service, social " hours, and those superior faculties, which they are now " abusing—to the dishonor of thy name—to the conta- " mination of their own souls—and (unless timely repen- " tance intervene) to their everlasting infamy and perdi- " tion."

I RIDE home amidst the gloomy void. All darkling and solitary, I can scarce discern my horse's head; and only guess out my blind road. *No companion*, but danger; or, perhaps, " destruction ready at my side."* —But. why do I fancy myself *solitary?* is not the Father of lights; the GOD of my life; the great and everlasting friend; always at my right-hand? because the day is excluded, is his omnipresence vacated? Though I have no earthly acquaintance near, to assist in case of a misfortune; or to beguile the time, and divert uneasy suspicions, by entertaining conferences; may I not lay my help upon the Almighty and converse with GOD by humble supplication? For this exercise, no place improper; no hour unseasonable; and no posture incommodious. This is *society*, the best of society,

* Job xviii 12.

even in solitude. This is a fund of delights, easily portable, and quite inexhaustible. A *treasure* this, of unknown value; liable to no hazard, from wrong or robbery; but perfectly secure, to to the lonely wanderer, in the most darksome paths.

AND why should I distress myself with apprehensions of *perils?* This access to GOD, is not only an indefeasible privilege, but a kind of *ambulatory garrison*. Those, who make known their requests unto GOD, and rely upon his protecting care; he gives *his angels* charge over their welfare. His angels are commissioned, to escort them in their travelling; and to hold up their goings, that they dash not their foot against a stone.* Nay, *he himself* condescends to be their guardian, and "keeps all their bones, so that not one of them is broken."—Between these persons, and the most mischievous objects, a treaty of peace is concluded. The articles of this grand alliance, are recorded in the Book of Revelation; and will, when it is for the real benefit of believers, assuredly be made good, in the administrations of Providence. *In that day*, saith the LORD, *will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground;* and they *shall be in league with the stones of the field.*† Though they fall headlong on the flints; even the flints, fitted to fracture the skull, shall receive them as into the arms of friendship; and not offer to hurt, whom the LORD is pleased to preserve.

MAY I then enjoy the presence of this gracious GOD, and darkness and light shall be both alike. Let HIM whisper peace to my conscience; and this dread silence shall me more charming, than the voice of eloquence, or the strains of music. Let HIM reveal his ravishing perfections in my soul; and I shall not want the saffron beauties of the morn, the golden glories of noon, or the impurpled evening sky. I shall sigh only for those most desirable and extinguished realms; where, the light of HIS countenance *perpetually* shines, and consequently—"there is no "night there."

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* Psal. xci. 11, 12. † Job v. 23. Hos. ii. 18

How surprising are the alterations of nature! I left her the preceding evening, plain, and unadorned. But, now a *thick rhime* has shed its hoary honors over all. It has shagged the fleeces of the sheep, and crisped the traveller's locks. The hedges are richly fringed, and all the ground is profusely powdered. The downward branches are tasseled with silver, and the upright are feathered with the plumy wave.

THE *fine*, are not always the *valuable*. The air, amidst all these gaudy decorations, is charged with chilling and *unwholesome* damps. The raw hazy influence spreads wide; sits deep; hangs heavy and oppressive on the springs of life. A listless languor clogs the animal functions; and the purple stream glides but faintly through its channels. In vain, the ruler of the day exerts his beaming powers: In vain, he attempts to disperse this insurrection of vapours. The sullen, malignant cloud refuses to depart. It envelopes the world, and *intercepts* the *prospect*. I look abroad for the neighbouring village I send my eye in quest of the rising turret but am scarce able to discern the very next house. Where are the blue arches of heaven? where is the radient countenance of the sun? where the boundless scenes of creation? lost, lost are their beauties; quenched their glories. The thronged theatre of the universe, seems an empty void; and all its elegant pictures, an undistinguished blank.—Thus would it have been with our intellectual views, if the *gospel* had not come in to our relief. We should have known, neither our true good, nor real evil. We had been a riddle to ourselves; the present state all confusion, and the future, impenetrable darkness. But, the Sun of righteousness, arising with potent and triumphant beams, has dissipated the interposing cloud. Has opened a prospect, more beautiful, than the blossoms of Spring; more chearing, than the treasures of Autumn; and far more enlarged, than the extent of the visible system. Which, having led the eye of the mind, through fields of grace, over rivers of righteousness, and hills crowned with knowledge; terminates at length, in the heavens; sweetly losing itself, in regions of infinite bliss, and endless glory.

As I walk along the fog, it seems, at some little distance, to be almost solid gloom; such as would shut out every glimpse of light, and totally imprison me in obscurity. But when I approach, and enter it; I find myself agreeably mistaken, and the mist much *thinner*, than it *appeared*. Such is the case, with regard to the *sufferings* of the present life: they are not, when experienced, so dreadful as a timorous imagination surmised. Such also is the case, with reference to the *gratifications* of *sense;* they prove not, when enjoyed, so substantial, as a sanguine expectation represented. In both instances, we are graciously disappointed. The keen edge of the calamity is blunted, that it may not wound us with incurable anguish: the exquisite relish of the prosperity is palled, that it may not captivate our affections, and enslave them to inferior delights.

SOMETIMES, the face of things wears a more pleasing form; the very reverse of the foregoing. The sober evening advances, to close the short-lived day. The firmament, clear and unsullied, puts on its brightest blue. The stars, in thronging multitudes, and with a peculiar brilliancy, glitter through the fair expanse. While the *frost* pours its subtle and penetrating influence, all around. Sharp and intensely severe, all the long night, the rigid æther continues its operations. When, late and slow, the morning opens her pale eye; in what a curious and amusing disguise, is nature dressed! the icicles, jagged and uneven, are pendent on the houses. A whitish film incrusts the windows, where mimic landskips rise, and fancied figures swell. The fruitful fields are hardened to iron; the moistened meadows are congealed to marble; and both resound (an effect unknown before) with the peasant's hasty tread. The stream is arrested in its career, and its ever-flowing surface chained to the banks. The fluid paths become a solid road; where the finny shoals were wont to rove, the sportive youth slide, or the rattling chariots roll. And (what would seem, to an inhabitant of the Southern World, as unaccountable as the deepest mysteries of our religion) that very same breath of heaven, which *cements* the lakes into a crystal pavement; *cleaves* the oaks, as it were with invisible wedges: " *breaks* in pieces the Northern iron, and the steel; even while it *builds* a bridge of icy rock, over the seas.

The air is all serenity. Refined by the nitrous particles, it affords the most distinct views, and extensive prospects. The seeds of *infection* are killed; and the *pestilence* destroyed, even in embryo. So, the cold of *affliction* tends to mortify our corruptions, and subdue our vicious habits.—The crouding atmosphere constringes our bodies, and braces our nerves. The spirits are buoyant, and sally briskly on the execution of their office. In the summer months, such an unclouded sky, and so bright a sun, would have melted us with heat, and softened us into supinenes. We should have been ready to throw our limbs under the spreading beach, and to lie at ease by the murmering brook. But, now, none loiters in his path; none is seen with folded arms. All is in motion; all is activity. Choice, prompted by the weather, supplies the spur of necessity. Thus, the *rugged* school of misfortune, often trains up the mind, to a vigorous exertion of its faculties. The *bleak* climate of *adversity*, often inspirits us with a manly resolution. When s soft and downy affluence, perhaps, would have relaxed all the generous springs of the soul; and have left it enervated with pleasure, or dissolved in indolence.

" *COLD* cometh out of the North." The winds, having swept those desarts of snow, arm themselves with millions of frozen particles, and make afierce descent upon our isle. Under black and scowling clouds, they drive, dreadfully whizzing through the darkened air. They growl around our houses; assault our doors; and, eager for entrance, fasten on our windows. Walls can scarce restrain them; bars are unable to exclude them; through every cranny they force their way. Ice is on their wings; they scatter agues through the land; and winter, *all* winter, rages as they go. Their breath is as a searing * iron to the little verdure, left in the plains. Vastly more pernicious to the tender plants, than the sharpest knife; they kill their

* This, I suppose, is the meaning of that figurative expression, used by the prophet Habakkuk; who speaking of the Chaldæans invading Judæa, says—Their faces, or the incursions they make, shall sup up, shall swallow greedily, shall devour utterly, the inhabitants of the country, and their valuable effects; as the keen, corroding blasts, of the East-wind, destroy every green thing in the field. *Hab.* i. 9.

branches, and wound the very root. Let not the corn venture to peep too freely from the entrenchment of the furrow; let not their fruit-bearing blossoms dare to come abroad, from their lodgment in the bark; lest these murderous blasts intercept and seize the unwary strangers, and destroy the hopes of the advancing year.

O, 'tis severely cold! who is so hardy, as not to shrink at this *excessively pinching* weather? See! Every face is pale. Even the blooming cheeks contract a gelid hue, and the teeth hardly forbear chattering.—Ye that sit easy and joyous, amidst your commodious apartments, solacing yourselves in the diffusive warmth of your fire; be mindful of your bretheren, in the chearless tenement of poverty. *Their* shattered panes are open to the piercing winds; a tattered garment, scarcely covers their shivering flesh; while a few faint and dying embers on the squalid hearth, rather mock their wishes, than warm their limbs.—While the generous Juices of *Oporto*, sparkle in your glasses; or the streams, beautifully tinged and deliciously flavoured with the *Chinese* leaf, smoke in the elegant porcelain: O remember, that many of your fellow-creatures, amidst all the rigour of these inclement skies, are emaciated with sickness; benumbed with age; and pining with hunger. Let "their loins bless you," for comfortable cloathing. Restore them with medicine; regale them with food; and baffle the raging year. So, may you never know any of their distresses, but only by the hearing of the ear; the seeing of the eye; or the feeling of a tender commiseration! Methinks, the bitter blustering winds plead for the poor indigents. May they breathe pity into *your* breasts; while they blow hardships into *their* huts!—Observe those blue flames, and ruddy coals in your chimney: quickened by the cold, they look more lively, and glow more strongly. Silent, but seasonable admonition to the gay circle, that chat and smile around them! *Thus*, may your hearts, at such a juncture of need, kindle into a peculiar benevolence! Detain not your superfluous piles of wood. Let them hasten to the relief of the starving family. Bid them expire in many a willing blaze, to mitigate the severity of the season, and chear the bleak abodes of want. So shall they

ascend, mingled with thanksgivings to God, and ardent prayers for your welfare—ascend, more grateful to heaven, than columns of the most costly incense.

Now the winds cease. Having brought their load, they are dismissed from service. They have wafted an immense cargo of clouds, which empty themselves in *snow*. At first, a few scattered shreds come wandering down the saddened sky. This slight skirmish is succeeded by a general onset. The flakes, large, and numerous, and thick-wavering, descend. They dim the air, and hasten the approach of night. Through all the night, in softest silence, and with a continual flow, this fleecy shower falls. In the morning, when we awake, what a surprising change appears!—Is this the same world? Here is no diversity of colour! I can hardly distinguish the trees, from the hills on which they grow. Which are the meadows, and which the plains? Where are the green pastures, and where the fallow lands? All things lie blended in bright confusion. So bright, that it heightens the splendor of day, and even dazzles the organs of sight.—The lawn is not so fair, as this snowy mantle, which invests the fields; and even the lilly, was the lilly to appear, would look tarnished in its presence. I can think of but *one* thing, which *excels* or equals the glittering robe of winter. Is any person desirous to know my meaning? He may find it explained in that admirable hymn,* composed by the royal penitent. Is any desirous to possess this matchless ornament? He will find it offered to his acceptance, in every page of the gospel.

See! (for the eye cannot satisfy itself, without viewing again and again, the curious, the delicate scene) See! how the hedges are habited, like spotless vestals! The houses are roofed with uniformity and lustre. The meadows are covered with a carpet of the finest ermine.† The groves bow beneath the lovely burden: and all, all below,

* Can any thing be whiter than snow? yes, saith David; if God be pleased to wash me from my sins in the blood of Christ, I shall be even whiter than snow. *Psal.* li. 7.

† This animal is milk-white. As for those black spots, which we generally see in linings of ermine, they are added by the furrier. In order to diversify the appearance, or heighten the beauty of the native colour.

is one wide, immense, shining waste of white.—By deep snows, and heavy rains, GOD *sealeth up the hand of every man*. And for this purpose, adds our sacred philosopher, *that all men may know his work*.† He confines them within their doors, and puts a stop to their secular business; that they may consider the things, which belong to their spiritual welfare. That, having a vacation from their ordinary employ, they may observe the works of his power, and become acquainted with the mysteries of his grace.

And worthy, worthy of all observation, are the works of the great Creator. They are prodigiously various, and perfectly amazing. How pliant and ductile is nature, under his forming hand! At his command, the self-same substance assumes the most different shapes; and is transformed into an endless multiplicity of figures. If HE ordains, the water is *moulded* into hail, and discharged upon the earth like a volley of shot; or, it is consolidated into ice, and defends the rivers, "as it were with a breast-"plate." At the bare intimation of his will, the very same element is scattered in hoar-frost, like a sprinkling of the most *attenuated* ashes; or, is spread over the surface of the ground, in these couches of swelling and *flaky* down.

The snow, however it may carry the appearance of cold, affords a *warm* garment for the corn; screens it from nipping frosts, and cherishes its infant growth. It will abide for a while, to exert a protecting care, and exercise a fostering influence. Then, touched by the sun, or thawed by a softening gale: the furry vesture, melts into genial moisture, sinks deep in the soil, and saturates its pores with the dissolving nitre; replenishing the glebe with those principles of vegetative life, which will open into the bloom of Spring, and ripen into the fruits of Autumn.—Beautiful emblem this, and comfortable representation of the Divine *Word;* both in the successful, and advantageous issue of its operation! *As the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to*

† Job xxxvii. 7.

*the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall my word be, that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereunto I sent it.**

NATURE, at length, puts off her lucid veil. She drops it, in a trickling *thaw*. The loosened snow, rolls in sheets from the houses. Various openings spot the hills; which, even, while we look, become larger and more numerous. The trees rid themselves, by degrees, of the hoary incumbrance. Shook from the springing boughs, part falls heavy to the ground, part flies abroad in shining atoms. Our fields and gardens, lately buried beneath the drifted heaps, rise plain and distinct to view.—Since we see nature once again, has she no verdant traces, no beautiful features, left? They are, like real friends, very rare; and therefore the more particularly to be regarded, the more highly to be valued.—Here and there, the *holly* hangs out her glowing berries; the *laurustinus* spreads her graceful tufts; and both, under a covert of unfading foliage.—The plain, but hardy *ivy* cloaths the decrepit, crazy wall; nor shrinks from the friendly office, though the skies frown, and the storm roars. The *laurel*, firm, erect, and bold, expands its leaf of vivid green. In spite of the united, the repeated attacks of wind, and rain, and frost, it preserves an undismayed lively look; and maintains its post, while withering millions fall around. Worthy, by vanquishing the rugged force of winter, worthy to adorn the triumphant conqueror's brow. —Nor must I forget the *bay-tree*; which scorns to be a mean pensioner, on a few transient sunny gleams; or, with a servile obsequiousness, to vary its appearance, in conformity to the changing seasons. By such indications of sterling worth, and staunch resolution, reading a lecture to the poet's genius; while it weaves the chaplet for his temples.—These, and a few other plants, clad with native verdure, retain their comely aspect, in the bleakest climes, and in the coldest months.

* Isai. lv. 10, 11.

SUCH, and so durable, are the accomplishments of a *refined* understanding, and an *amiable* temper. The tawdry ornaments of dress, which catch the unthinking vulgar, soon become insipid and despicable. The rubied lip, and the rosy cheek fade. Even the sparkling wit, as well as the sparkling eye, please but for a moment. But the virtuous mind has charms, which survive the decay of every inferior embellishment. Charms, which add to the fragrancy of the flower, the *permanency* of the *ever-green*.

SUCH, likewise, is the happiness of the sincerely religious; like a tree, says the inspired moralist, "whose leaf shall not fall." He borrows not his peace from external circumstances; but has a fund within, and is "satisfied from himself."* Even though impoverished by calamitous accidents; he is rich in the *possession* of *grace*, and richer in the *hope* of *glory*. His joys are infinitely superior to, as well as nobly independent on, the transitory glow of sensual delight, or the capricious favours of, what the world calls, fortune.

IF the *snow* composes the light-armed troops of the sky; methinks, the *hail* constitutes its heavy artillery.† When driven by a vehement wind, with what dreadful impetuosity, does that stony shower fall! How it rebounds from the frozen ground, and rattles on the resounding dome! It attenuates the rivers into smoke, or scourges them into foam. It crushes the infant flowers; cuts in pieces the gardener's early plants; and batters the feeble fortification of his glasses into shivers. It darts into the traveller's face: he turns, with haste, from the stroke; or feels, on his cheek, for the gushing blood. If he would retreat into the house, it follows him even thither; and, like a determined enemy, that pushes the pursuit, dashes through the crackling panes.—But, the fierce attack is quickly over. The clouds have soon spent their shafts; soon unstrung their bow. Happy for the inhabitants of the earth, that a sally

* Prov. xiv. 14.

† He casteth forth his ice like morsels. Psal. cxlvii 17. Which, in modern language, might be thus expressed: he poureth his hail like a volley of shot.

so dreadfully *furious*, should be so remarkably *short!* what else could endure the shock, or escape destruction?

But, behold a *bow*, of no hostile intention! A bow, painted in variegated colours, on the disburdened cloud.—How vast is the extent, how delicate the texture, of that *showery arch!* It compasseth the heavens with a glorious circle; and teaches us to forget the horrors of the storm.—Elegant its form, and rich its tincture; but more delightful its sacred significancy. While the violet and the rose, blush in its beautiful aspect; the olive-branch smiles in its gracious import. It writes, in radiant dyes, what the angels sung in harmonious strains; "peace on earth, and good-will towards men." It is the stamp of *insurance*, for the continuance of seed-time, and harvest, for the preservation and security of the visible world.* It is the comfortable *token*,† of a better state, and a happier kingdom—a kingdom, where sin shall cease, and misery be abolished; where storms shall beat, and winter pierce no more; but holiness, happiness, and joy, like one unbounded *spring*, for ever, ever bloom.

* Gen. ix. 12—16. † Rev. iv.



A

TREATISE

ON THE

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OF DAUGHTERS.

Train up a child in the way she should go; and when she is old, she will not depart from it.---*Prov.* xxii. 6



A TREATISE,

&c.

IT has long been a prevailing report, that among persons of education and distinction, true religion is very rare. This, I would hope, is an invidious rumour, rather than a true representation of the case. May it not be an artifice of the grand enemy? calculated to bring the best and noblest of causes into disrepute: as though politeness and piety were inconsistent: as though grace and good-breeding were irreconcileable.—Is then the faith of Christ quite fatal to refined manners? as the rod of *Moses* was to the counterfeit miracles of the magicians. No: it is rather like the influence of the sanctuary on the rod of *Aaron;* which, while it remained at a distance from the tabernacle, was a dry, sapless, and barren stick; but when deposited before the ark, was quickened into vegetable light, was adorned with a milk-white bloom, and enriched with full-grown fruit; or, as the sacred historian expresses this surprising fact, "It brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds." *Numb.* xvii. 8.

I FIND upon the list of saints, the most renowned kings and victorious generals; the ablest politicians, and the greatest philosophers: men, that have bid the sun stand still, and prolong the departing day; have laid an embargo upon darkness, and protracted the shades of night; have commanded the ground to cleave asunder, and transmit their presumptuous foes to a strange and inevitable destruction; have divided the impetuous waves, and led their followers to safety and to conquest, through the depths of the

sea. Men, who have walked in the burning fiery furnace, as under the shelter of an embowering arbour; and sat in the lion's den, amidst a herd of hungry monsters, with as much serenity, and as much security, as amidst a circle of bosom friends.

I MYSELF have known various persons, admired for their accomplished behaviour, and revered for their exalted station, who have thought it the highest honor to be the servants of JESUS CHRIST. My excellent friend *Camillus*, at whose house I now reside, is one of the number. I cannot refrain from giving a pourtrait of *Camillus*; or rather, of a few of his distinguishing features: for, to paint him in full proportion, as he daily appears, in all the mild, the benign Majesty of—domestic authority—parental government—and christian zeal—to do this, would require a much abler hand than mine.

CAMILLUS not long ago entertained in his house a young Clergyman, who was always treated with a respect, suitable to the dignity of his office, and the piety of his behaviour. Having lately presented the worthy Ecclesiastic to a living, and always requiring residence on the Benefice, he is now destitute of a Chaplain. Remembering, however, that all Christians are spiritual Priests; he thinks it no dishonor, to have an immediate and personal audience with the King of Heaven; nor acting at all out of character, to represent the wants of his household, with his own mouth, at the throne of grace.

Before supper is introduced, the evening incense ascends. This, rather than a later hour, is pitched upon, that the little congregation may join in the sacred service, with a lively devotion. After a plentiful meal, when the limbs are weary, people, even though kneeling, and in the presence of God, are more inclined to nod than to pour out their souls; are very, very apt to mistake the cushion for a pillow.—No servant is allowed to be absent; one only excepted, whose presence in the kitchen is absolutely necessary. Acquainted with their master's resolution, they are careful so to manage their affairs, and dispatch their business; that no avoidable obstacle may intervene, to detain them from the stated worship.

When all are assembled, without either tumultuous disorder in their approach, or a slovenly negligence in their apparel, a chapter is read. *Camillus* makes the choice. He imagines, it is not so useful for his family, whose memories are weak, and their capacities scanty, to read the lesson for the day. He has, therefore, selected some of the most instructive and animating portions of Scripture; and judges it adviseable to peruse these again, rather than to go regularly through the inspired writings.—The servants take it by turns to read; which improves them in the practice, and keeps them awake. If any of them discovers a disposition to sleep, to him the office is sure to be assigned.

When the chapter is finished, *Camillus* singles out some one verse, of very weighty and edifying import; which, for the space of five or six minutes, he explains, applies, and affectionately urges upon their consciences.—This done, with great seriousness, and profound reverance, he offers up evening prayers. His prayers consist of short sentences, and the whole is performed in a little time. Every part is pronounced with that deliberate slowness, and solemn acent, which command attention, and create awe. He makes a very perceivable pause, at the close of each petition; that every one may have leisure to add, in silence, a hearty amen; and to recollect the merits of that blessed Redeemer, which render every thanksgiving acceptable, and every supplication successful.

In the morning, before breakfast, the worship of the living God is renewed. At this juncture, *Camillus* omits the chapter; but requires one of his domestics to repeat the verse, on which he enlarged the preceding night. None knows, which shall be called to this task; therefore, every one is obliged to be properly prepared. He throws the substance of his exhortation, into a few searching and interesting questions, which he addresses to one of his children or servants: for, in this respect, no difference is made. All are equally enjoined to remember: all are equally accountable for what they hear.—Sometimes, he encourages those, whose answers shew, that they have given diligent heed to his instructions.—Sometimes, he puts

on an air of severity mixed with tenderness, and reproves the notoriously negligent. Always, he re-inculcates the principle points; charging them to retain the doctrines in their memory, and revolve them in their thoughts, while they are pursuing their respective business.—These doctrines are the seed of faith, the root of godliness. Unless THESE be lodged in the mind, and operate on the heart, he never expects to have his domestics commence true believers, or real christians. No more than the husbandman can reasonably expect a crop in harvest, without sowing his field; or the florist promise himself a blow of tulips, without planting his parterre.

I have given a glimpse of *Camillus*, at the head of his his family; let me now shew my favorite in another attitude—*Camillus* is convinced, that no trust is of superior, or of equal importance, to the tuitionary cultivation * of an immortal soul. As Providence has blessed him with two fine daughters, their present and future happiness, is the reigning object of his care. He has no interest so much at heart, as to give them a truly refined education; such as may render them an ornament and a blessing to society, while they pass the time of their sojourning here below; and may train them up for a state of everlasting bliss, when the world and its transitory scenes shall be no more.

Camillus never could persuade himself to admire the maxims of prudence, said to be gathered from the extravagant rant of our tragedies; and less is his esteem for those modest dispositions, which people pretend to imbibe from the luscious gallantries of comedy. For which reason, he has no impatient desire, to secure for Miss *Mitissa* and Miss *Serena*, a place in the front-box.—However, as we are apt immoderately to covet, what is absolutely forbidden, he has himself attended them, once or twice, to

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* Sensêre, quid Mens ritè, quid Indoles
Nutrita faustis sub Penetralibus Posset.——HOR.

The meaning of which in English is:

" What could be done we know, were we but led
" By bright example, and by virtue bred "

the theatrical entertainments, and public diversions: thinking it much the safest method, that their curiosity should be gratified under his own inspection: and hoping to make them sensible how much they endanger their virtue, who too often frequent them; how shamefully they debase their affections, who are passionately fond of them; and what mere phantoms they follow, who seek for satisfaction in such delusory delights.

They learn to dance, in order to acquire a genteel air, and a graceful demeanor; not to shine at a ball, or win the worthless admiration of fops.—He is content to have them unacquainted with the wild and romantic fables of heathen poetry. Nor is under any painful apprehensions, of damping the sprightliness of their temper, though they have no taste for the chimerical adventures of our romances, and are strangers to the loose intrigues of our novels. Being fully persuaded, that there is as much sound sense, as smartness of thought, in that celebrated saying,

> Retire, and read your BIBLE, to be gay,
> There truths abound of sovereign aid to peace!*

He has introduced them to the knowledge of history, and its instructive facts. They have a tolerable idea of the four universal monarchies; so eminent for their great events, and so circumstantially foretold in scripture. They have been led through the most remarkable transactions of our own country, and are pretty well acquainted with the present state of *Europe*. They have, all along, been taught to observe the wonderful revolutions of empires, and the adorable procedure of Providence: that they may discern how *the fashion of this world passeth away*;† and how

* Dr. Young's eighth Night-Thought.

† 1 Corinth. vii. 31. Not only the little projects, and puny atchievements, of private persons; but the power of distinguished families; the policies of mighty states; the magnificence of the greatest kingdoms; all, all are in a state of perpetual fluctuation. They fade away (as the Apostle most significantly describes the case) like the graceful and glossy aspect of some delicate flower, when the sun arises with scorching heat, Jam. i. 11. They pass away (as the Prophet still more emphatically speaks) like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors, which the wind carries off on its wings, and the place thereof is known no more, Dan. ii. 35.

happy are the people, how happy the persons, *who have the LORD for their GOD*. They have been taught to observe the honorable success, that has usually attended the practice of integrity, guided by prudence; together with the scandal and ruin, which have always pursued folly in her senseless rambles, and dogged vice to her horrid haunts. That they may see the rocks on which some have split, and avoid the destructive track: see the road which has conducted others to the haven of happiness, and steer the same auspicious course.

They have been initiated in geography, and understand the several divisions of the globe; the extent of its principal kingdoms; and the manners of their various inhabitants. They will tell you the peculiar commodities, which each climate produces; whence comes the tea, that furnishes their breakfast; and whence the sugar, that renders it palatable: what mountains supply them with wines, and what islands send them their spices: in what groves, the silk worms spin the materials for their cloaths; and what mines* supply them with the diamonds that sparkle in their ear-rings.—A screen covered with a set of coloured maps, and a custom of referring from the public papers to those beautiful draughts, has rendered the acquisition of this knowledge, a diversion rather than a task; has enticed them into a valuable branch of science, under the inviting disguise of amusement.—This serves to enlarge their apprehensions of things; gives them magnificent thoughts of the great Creator; and may help to suppress that silly self-admiration, which prompts so many pretty idols, to fancy themselves the only considerable creatures under heaven.

They spell to perfection; and have obtained this art, by a sort of play, rather than by laborious application. Whenever they asked any little gratification, it has been their papa's custom, to make them spell the word: which if they performed aright, they seldom failed to succeed in their request.—They are mistresses of the needle; and the

* The best of the diamond mines are in the kingdom of Golconda, near to Madras (or Fort St. George as it is frequently called, because the East-India Company have so named the Fort they have built, for the security of their important factory at Madras.)

youngest, whose genius inclines that way, is expert in using the pencil.—Music is their recreation, not their business. The eldest, to a skilful finger, adds a melodious and well-regulated voice. She often entertains me with singing an anthem to her harpsichord. Entertains, did I say? she really edifies me. These truly excellent performances, exalt the desires, and compose the affections. They inspire such a serenity of delight, as leaves neither a sting in the conscience, nor a stain on the imagination. Methinks, they bring us a little antepast of heaven, and tune our souls for its harmonious joys.

Thoroughly versed in the most practical parts of arithmetic, they have each her week, wherein to be entrusted with the management of a sum of money. This they disburse, as circumstances require, for the smaller necessaries of the family. Of this they keep an exact account, and make a regular entry of each particular in their day-book. Not long ago, a tenant of inferior rank, came to *Camillus* with his rent. Instead of receiving it himself, he referred him to Miss *Serena*. You would have been delighted to observe the behaviour of our little landlady, on this occasion: the engaging condescension, with which she addressed the honest rustic: the tender good-nature, with which she enquired after my dame and the family at home: the ready dexterity, with which she wrote and subscribed a proper receipt: and, above all, her amiable generosity, in returning half a crown, to buy a copy-book for his eldest son; "who, he said, was just going into joining-hand; but "he feared, would never come to spell or write, half so "well as her ladyship."

Though *Camillus* is careful to ground them betimes in the rules of œconomy, he is equally careful to cultivate a spirit of discreet beneficence.—A few days ago, when my friend and his lady were abroad, Miss *Mitissa* was informed of a poor woman in the parish, just brought to bed, after a long and hard labour; who, being unhappily married to a sot of a fellow, was at a time when the choicest comforts are scarcely sufficient, destitute of the meanest conveniences. Upon hearing the calamitous case, she immediately dispatched a servant, with a crown from her

weekly stock. Part, to buy for the afflicted creature some present accommodations; and part, to defray the expences, at such a juncture unavoidable: but gave a strict charge, that the whole should be employed for the relief of the distressed mother, and her helpless infant; none of it fingered or enjoyed by the worthless drone, her husband. When *Camillus* returned, he was so pleased with this seasonable and well judged charity; that, besides his commendations and caresses, he farther rewarded our considerate, matron-like benefactress, by making her a present of *Clarissa* * For, he always contrives to make, what tends to their improvement, the matter of their reward. If they have committed a fault, they are forbid the privilege of using their maps. If they have behaved in a becoming manner, their recompence is, not a piece of money, or a paper of sweetmeats, but some new instruction on the globe, some new lesson on the harpsichord, which may at once delight and improve them.

To prevent a haughty carriage, and to worm out all inordinate self-love, he teaches them to consider their neighbours, as members of the same universal family, and children of the same Almighty Father. However poor in their circumstances, or mean in their aspect, they are objects of GOD's infinitely tender regards.—Of that GOD, who has given his own Son to suffer death for their pardon; and has prepared a heaven of endless bliss, for their final reception. For which reason they should despise none, but honor all: should be as ready to do them good, as the hand is ready to sooth the eye, when it smarts; or ease the head when it achs.—One afternoon, when he was going to treat them with an orange, he bid each of them bring a fine toy, lately received for a present. It was made in the shape of a knife; the handle of ivory, and inlaid with the gayest colours: the blade of glass, most dazzlingly bright, but without an edge. Cut the orange in two, said their Papa. When they both tried with their pretty knives, and to their no small mortification, both failed. He furnished them with another, of

* A book admirably calculated to instruct and entertain: wrote by the celebrated Mr. Richardson, in eight volumes duodecimo

more ordinary appearance, but tolerably sharp. Wiih this they easily pierced the rind, and came at the delicious juice: "Who now, said *Camillus*, would not prefer one such ser- "viceable, though plain utensil, to a hundred of those "glittering, but worthless trifles? and you my dear chil- "dren, if you have no other recommendations, than a "shewy person, and the trappings of dress; you will be as "contemptible in your generation, as that insignificant bau- "ble. But, if it is the desire of your hearts, and the en- "deavour of your lives, to be extensively useful; you will "gain, and what is better, you will deserve respect: your "names will be precious, and your memories blessed."

With equal watchfulness, he discountenances all those acts of petulant barbarity, which children are so apt to exercise on the reptile creation. He will allow no court of inquisition to be erected within his house! no, not upon the most despicable, or even the noxious animals. The very nuisances, that are endued with life, he thinks, should be dispatched, not with a lingering butchery, but with a merciful expedition.—To rend in pieces a poor fly, and feast their eyes with the mangled limbs, shivering and convulsed in the pangs of death: to impale a wretched insect on the needle or the bodkin; and, what is still more shocking, to take pleasure in hearing its passionate moan, and seeing its agonizing struggles: such practices he absolutely forbids, as insufferable violations of nature's law. Such as tend to extinguish the soft emotions of pity, and inure the mind to a habit of inhumanity.—He often informs his lovely pupils, that every living creature is sensible of pain: that none can be abused in this cruel manner, without suffering very exquisite misery. To turn their torments into pastime, and make sport with their anguish, is a rigour, more than tyrannical, worse than brutal, is the very reverse of that benign Providence, whose *tender mercies are over ALL his works.*

He proposes to give them a taste of *natural philosophy*, and to accommodate them with the best microscopes; that the use of these instruments, and a spice of *that* knowledge, may inspire them with an early admiration of nature's works, and with the deepest veneration of nature's al-

mighty author.—*Camillus* has no design to finish a couple of female philosophers; or to divert their attention from those domestic arts, which are the truest accomplishments of the sex:* yet neither would he have his daughters debarred from that rational and exalted delight, which is to be found in the contemplating curiosities of the great Creator's cabinet. Why may they not, without departing from their *own*, on encroaching on the *masculine* character; why may they not be acquainted with the accurately nice structure of an animal; or with the process and effects of vegetation? why may they not learn the admirable operations of the air, or the wonderful properties of the water? have some general notion of the immense magnitudes, the prodigious distances, and the still more amazing revolutions of the heavenly orbs? he apprehends it very practicable, to conduct an entertainment with dignity, and order a family with propriety; even while they retain some tolerable idea of these magnificent laws, which regulate the system of the universe.

The microscope, whenever they are inclined to amuse themselves, will shew them a profusion of splendid ornaments in some of the most common and contemptible objects. It will shew them gold and embroidery, diamonds and pearl, azure, green, and vermillion; where unassisted eyes behold nothing, but provocatives of their abhorrence. This instrument will shew them the brightest varnish, and the most curious carving, even in the minutest seraphs of existence. Far more surprizing than the magic feats of the most dexterous juggler, it will treat their sight, not with delusive, but with real wonders. A huge elephant shall stalk, where a puny nite was wont to crawl. Blood shall bound from the beating heart, and eyes sparkle with a lively lustre; limbs shall play the most sprightly motions, or stand composed in the most graceful attitudes; where nothing ordinarily appeared, but a confused speck of animated matter.

* For, nothing lovelier can be found
In woman, than to study household good.

MILTON.

A tincture of philosophy will be the *cosmetic* of nature: will render all her scenes lovely, and all her apartments a theatre of diversion: diversions infinitely superior to those dangerous delights, which are so apt to inveigle the affections, and debauch the minds of young people.—When philosophy lends her optics, an unclouded morning, beautiful with the rising sun: a clear night, brilliant with innumerable stars; will be a more pleasing spectacle, than the gaudiest illuminations of the assembly-room. The melody of birds, and the murmur of fountains; the humming insect, and the sighing gale; will be a higher gratification, than the finest airs of an opera. A field covered with corn, or a meadow besprinkled with daisies; a marsh planted with osiers, or a mountain shaded with oaks; will yield a far more agreeable prospect, than the most pompous scenes that decorate the stage. Should clouds overcast the heavens, or winter disrobe the flowers: an enquiry into the causes of these grand vicissitudes, will more than compensate the transitory loss. A discovery of the divine wisdom and divine goodness, in these seemingly disastrous changes, will impart gaiety to the most gloomy sky, and make the most unornamented seasons smile.

It is for want of such truly elegant and satisfactory amusements, that so many ladies of the first distinction, and finest genius, have no proper employ for their delicate capacities; but lose their happiness, in flights of caprice, or fits of the vapour: lose their time in the most insipid chat, or the most whimsical vagaries: while thought is a burthen, and reflection is a drudgery, solitude fills them with horror, and a serious discourse makes them melancholy.

Above all, *Camillus* is most earnestly desirous to have his tender charge, grounded in the principles, and actuated with the spirit, of christianity. No scheme, he is thoroughly persuaded, was ever so wisely calculated, to sweeten their tempers, to exalt their affections, and form them to felicity, either in this world or another. It is therefore his daily endeavour, by the most easy and endearing methods of instruction, to fill their minds with the

knowledge of those heavenly doctrines; and win their hearts to the love of that invaluable book, in which they are delineated.—He longs to have a sense of GOD Almighty's goodness impressed on their souls. From this source, under the influences of the sanctifying spirit, he would derive all the graces, and all the duties of godliness. With this view, he speaks of the divine Majesty, not only as super-eminently great, but as most transcendently possessed of every delightful, every charming excellence. He represents all the comforts they enjoy, and every blessing they receive, as the gifts of his bountiful hand, and as an earnest of unspeakably richer favors. He often, often reminds them, that, whatever their heavenly Father *commands*, *forbids*, *inflicts*, proceeds from his over-flowing kindness, and is intended for their eternal good, if, by these expedients, he may awaken in their minds, an habitual gratitude to their everlasting Benefactor. The actings of which noble principle, are not only fruitful in every good work, but productive of the truest satisfaction. Somewhat like the fragrant steams of consecrated incense: which, while they honored the great Object of worship, regaled with their pleasing perfumes of devout wor[illegible]

Nothing is more displeasing to *C[illegible]*, than the fond flatteries, which their injudicious admirers bestow, on their shape and complexion, the gracefulness of their [illegible], and the vivacity of their wit. He would fain [illegible] sensible, that these embellishments are of the [illegible], and most fading nature;*—that if they render [illegible] possessors vain and self-conceited [illegible] than a hump on the back, a wen in the neck, or stuttering in the speech.—He would have them thoroughly convin-

* Here is the amiable and noble reverse of that modish picture represented by M[illegible]

> For that fair female troop thou saw'st, that seem'd
> Of goddesses, so blithe, so smooth, so gay,
> Yet empty of all good; wherein consists
> Woman's domestic honor and chief praise;
> Bred only and completed to the taste
> Of lustful appetence, to sing, to dance,
> To dress, and troll the tongue, and roll the eye.
>
> Book XI. 614

ced, that notwithstanding all their silks, diamonds, and other marks of their superior circumstances, they are ignorant, guilty, impotent creatures. Blind to truths of the last importance; deserving the vengeance of eternal fire, and unable of themselves, to think a good thought. That from such convictions, they may perceive their absolute need of a Saviour: a Saviour in all his offices—as a prophet, to teach them heavenly wisdom—as a priest to atone for all their many, many sins—as a king, to subdue their many iniquities, write his laws in their hearts, and make them, in all their conversation, holy.

In short; the point he chiefly labours, is, to work in their hearts a deep, an abiding sense, that GOD is their supreme, their only good; that the blessed JESUS is the rock of their hopes, and the fountain of their salvation; that all their dependence, for acquiring the beauties of holiness, and tasting the joys of the sublimest virtue, is to be placed on the HOLY GHOST the comforter.—Amidst all these efforts of his own, he never forgets, never fails to plead, that precious promise of unchangeable JEHOVAH; *I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thy offspring; and they shall grow up*, in knowledge and in grace, *as willows by the water courses.*

A lady of brilliant parts, but no very extraordinary piety, told *Camillus:* that he would spoil the pretty dears; would extinguish that decent pride, and fondness for pleasure, which are shining qualifications in an accomplished young lady; which give her an elevation of sentiment, and a delicacy of taste, greatly superior to the ignoble vulgar. —To whom he replied: "Far from extirpating their passions, I only attempt to turn them into a right channel, "and direct them to the worthiest objects. Willing I "am, that they should have a decent ambition; an ambition, not to catch the giddy coxcomb's eye, or to be the "hackneyed toast of rakes: but to please their parents; to "make a husband happy; and to promote the glory of "God.—They may entertain a fondness for pleasure; but "such pleasure, as will ennoble their souls; afford them "substantial satisfaction; and prepare them for the fruition of immortal bliss.—Let them be covetous also, if

" you please, madam; but covetous of redeeming their " time, and of gaining intellectual improvement: covet- " ous of those riches, which no moth can corrupt, nor " thief steal; which neither time, nor death destroy."

In all these instances of parental solicitude, his beloved *Emilia* takes her constant, her willing share; contributes her advice in every plan that is concerted; and her hearty concurrence in every expedient that is executed: every expedient, for polishing the human jewel,* and making their manners, as faultless as their forms.—May the GOD of infinite goodness, the sacred source of all perfection, prosper their endeavours! That, as the young ladies are adorned, in their persons, with native beauty; they may be enriched, in their understandings, with refined knowledge; and dignified, in their souls with the spirit of the blessed JESUS.—Then, surely, more amiable objects, the eye of man cannot behold: more desirable partners, the heart of man cannot wish.

* Delightful task! to rear the tender thought,
To teach the young idea how to shoot,
And pour the fresh instruction o'er the mind.

Thomson's Spring.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME

THE

WORKS

OF

JAMES HERVEY, A. M.

LATE RECTOR OF WESTON-FAVELL,
In Northamptonshire.

Vol. 2.

CONTAINING

THERON AND ASPASIO.

The memorial of thine abundant kindness shall be shewed, and men shall sing of thy righteousness.—*Psalm* cxlv. 7.

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1801.



A SERIES OF DIALOGUES.

Dialogue I.

THERON, was a gentleman of fine taste; of accurate, rather than extensive reading: and particulary charmed with the study of nature. He traced the plannets in their courses, and examined the formation of the meanest vegetable; not merely to gratify a refined curiosity, but chiefly to cultivate the nobler principles of mortality. Several discoveries he made, and every discovery he improved, to this important end— to raise in his mind, more *exalted* apprehensions of the Supreme BEING—and to inlarge his affections, with a *disinterested* benevolence; conformable, in some degree, to that boundless liberality, which pervades and animates the whole creation.

ASPASIO, was not without his share of polite literature, and philosophical knowledge. He had taken a tour through the circle of the sciences; and having transiently surveyed the productions of human learning, devoted his final attention to the inspired writings. These he studied, with the unbiassed impartiality of a critic; yet with the reverential simplicity of a christian. These he regarded, as the *unerring* standard of duty—the *authentic* charter of salvation—and the *brightest* mirror of the DEITY; affording the most satisfactory and sublime display of all the devine attributes.

Theron, was somewhat warm in his temper; and would, upon occasion, make use of a little innocent rallery; not to expose his friend, but to enliven the conversation. Sometimes *disguising* his real sentiments; in order to sift the subject, or discover the opinion of others.—*Aspasio* seldom indulges the humourous or satyrical vein, but argues with *meekness of wisdom*. Never puts on the appearance of guile, but always speaks the dictates of his heart.

Aspasio was on a visit at *Theron's* seat.—One evening, when some neighbouring gentlemen were just gone, and had left them alone, the conversation took the following turn.

Asp. I would always be ready, both to acknowledge, and applaud, whatever is amiable in the conduct of others. The gentlemen, who gave us their company at dinner, seem to be all of a different character. Yet each, in his own way, is extremely agreeable,

Lysander has lively parts, and is quick at repartee. But he never abuses his wit, to create uneasiness in the honest heart, or to flush the modest cheek with confusion.—What solidity of judgment, and depth of penetration, appear in *Crito!* yet, how free are his discourses, from the magisterial tone, or the dictatorial solemnity!—*Philenor's* taste in the polite arts, is remarkably correct: yet, without the least tincture of vanity, or any weak fondness for applause. He never interrupts the progress, or wrests the topic of conversation; in order to shine in his particular province.—*Trebonious*, I find, has signalized his valour in several campaigns. Though a warrior and a traveller, he gives himself no overbearing or ostentations airs. In *Trebonious*, you see the brave officer, regulated by all the decency of the academic, and sweetened with all the affability of the courtier.

No one effects a morose *reserve*, or assumes an immoderate *loquacity*. To engross the talk, is tyrannical: to seal up the lips, is monkish. Every one, therefore, from a fund of good sense, contributes his quota: and each speaks, not with an ambition to *set off* himself, but from a desire to *please* the company.

Ther. Indeed, *Aspasio*, I think myself happy, in this accomplished set of acquaintance. Who add all the com-

plaisance and politeness of the gentleman, to the benevolence and fidelity of the friend.

Their conversation is as innocent as their taste is refined. They have a noble abhorrence of slander, and detest the low ungenerous artifices of detraction.—No loose jest, has either the service of their tongue, or the sanction of their smile.—Was you to be with them, in their freest moments; you would hear nothing, that has a tendency to *profaneness*, or is in any way injurious to *purity* of morals. Even their gaiety is remote from indecency, and their very wit free from gall.

Asp There is but *one* qualification wanting, to render your friends completely valuable; and their social interviews a continual blessing.

Ther Pray, what is that?

Asp. A turn for more serious conferences.—Their literary debates are beautiful sketches, of whatever is curious in the sciences, or delicate in the arts From their remarks on our national affairs, and on foreign occurrences, a person may almost form a system of politics.—But, they never touch upon any topic of *religion*; never celebrate the *sublime perfections* of the DEITY; never illustrate the beauties, nor enforce the truths—

Ther. Fie upon you, *Aspasio*, for your unpolite hint! Who can forbear interrupting the harangue, which pleads for such an outrageous violation of the *mode!* which would introduce religious talk into our fashionable assemblies!—How is it that you, who, in other instances, are a gentleman of refinement, can be so strangely inelegant in this particular?

Asp. For such a practice, *Theron*, we have no inconsiderable precedents.—Thus *Socrates*, the wisest of the *Athenian* sages: thus *Scipio*, the most accomplished of the *Roman* generals, conversed.—Thus *Cicero*, the prince of orators, improved his elegant retirement at the *Tusculan* villa.—And *Horace*, the brightest genius in the court of *Augustus*, formed the most agreeable hours of his conversation, upon this very plan.

Was I to enumerate all the patrons of this, forgive me if I say, *more honorable* mode; the most illustrious names of antiquity, would appear on the list.

Ther. This practice, however extolled by the philosophic gentry of antient times; would make a very *singular* figure, in the present age.

Asp. And should not the *copy*, after which the generality of mankind write, be singularly correct? Persons of taste and distinction, are the pattern for general imitation: are the copy, in conformity to which, the world adjust their manners, and regulate their behaviour. They, therefore, are under the strongest obligations, not to give a contemptible stamp to the fashion.—Benevolence to their fellow-creatures calls loudly upon them, a concern for the public good challenges it at their hands, that they signalize themselves by a pre-eminence in all that is excellent.

Ther. Away, away with these austere notions! Such a strain of conversation would *damp* the gaiety of our spirits, and *flatten* the relish of society. It would turn the assembly into a conventicle, and make it lent all the year round.

Asp. Can it then be an austere practice, to cultivate the understanding, and improve the heart?—Can it damp the gaiety of our spirits to refine and exalt them, after the model of the highest perfection?—Or, will it flatten the relish of society, to secure and anticipate everlasting delights?

Ther. Everlasting delights, *Aspasio!*—To talk of such a subject, would be termed, in every circle of wit and gallantry, an usurpation of the parson's office. A low method, of retailing by scraps, in the parlour; what the man in black, vends by wholesale from the pulpit.—It would infallibly mark us out for *pedants*. And, for aught I know, might expose us to the suspicion of *enthusiasm*.

Asp. Your men of wit must excuse me, if I cannot persuade myself to admire, either the delicacy of their language, or the justness of their opinion.

The first, be it ever so *humane* and *graceful*, I resign to themselves.—As for the other, I would beg leave to enquire; "Are the clergy, then, the *only* persons, who should "act the becoming part, and converse like rational beings? "is solid wisdom, and sacred truth, the privilege of their

" order? while nothing is left for you and me, but the
" play of fancy, or the luxuries of sense?"

I would farther ask the circles of gallantry, " Where is
" the impropriety, of interweaving the *noble* doctrines, dis-
" played by the preacher, with our common discourse?
" Or, what the inconvenience, of introducing the *amiable*
" graces, recommended by his lectures, into our ordinary
" practice?"

Will such an exercise of our speech, rank us among pedants? Is this the badge of enthusiasm? A splendid and honorable badge truly! such as must add weight to any cause, and worth to any character.

Ther. This would curb the sprightly sallies of wit; and extinguish that engaging glow of good humour, which enlivens our genteel intercourses. Accordingly, you may observe; that if any *formal creature*, takes upon him to mention, in polite company, an edifying truth, or a text of scripture; the pretty chat, though ever so profusely flowing, stagnates in an instant. Each voluble and facetious tongue seems to be struck with a sudden palsy.—Every one wonders at the strange man's face; and they all conclude him, either *mad*, or a *methodist*.

Asp. Agreeable strokes of wit, are by no means incompatible with useful conversation. Unless we mistake an *insipid* vivacity, or *fantastic* levity, for wit and facetiousness.—Neither have I heard, that, among all our acts of parliament, any one has passed to *divorce* good sense and good humour. Why may they not both reside on the same lips, and both circulate through the same assembly?—For my own part, I would neither have our discourse *soured* with austerity, nor *evaporate* into impertinence: but unite (as a judicious antient advises) the benefits of improvement, with the blandishments of pleasantry.—And as to your polite people; if they can find more music, in the magpie's voice, than in the nightingale's note; I must own myself as much surprized at their ears, as they are at the strange man's face.

Ther. With all your grey-headed authorities, I fancy, you will find very few proselytes, among the professors of modern refinement. Fashion is, with the world, the stand-

ard of morals, as well as of clothes. And he must be of a very *peculiar* turn indeed, who would choose to be ridiculous in either.

Asp. Rather, Theron, he must be of a very pliant turn, who tamely delivers up his conduct, to be moulded by a fashion; which has neither true elegance to dignify it, nor the least usefulness to recommend it.

And which, I beseech you, is most ridiculous?—He, who servilely imitates every *idle* fashion, and is the very *ape* of corrupt custom?—Or he, who asserts his native liberty; and resolutely follows, where wisdom and truth lead the way.

Ther. Would you then obtrude religious discourse, upon *every* company? Consider, *Aspasio*, what a motley figure this would make.—A wedding, and a sermon!—Quadrille, and St *Paul!*—The last new play, and primitive christianity!

Asp. You know the rule, *Theron*, which is given by the great "MASTER of our assemblies;" *cast not your pearls before swine.*"* Some there are, so immersed in sensuality, that they can relish nothing, but the coarsest husks of conversation. To these, neither offer your pearls, nor prostitute your intimacy.

But, when persons of a liberal education, and elevated sentiments—when *these* meet together; why should not their discourse be suitable to the eminence of their rank and the superiority of their genius? Raised far above the level of that *trite* and *effeminate* strain—"Upon my honor the actress topt her part. Heavens! how charmingly she "sung! how gracefully she trod the stage!"

Ther. Indeed, my *Aspasio*, I am entirely in your way of thinking; however I have hitherto put on the mask.—The gift of speech, is one great *prerogative* of our rational nature. And 'tis pity, that such a superior faculty, should be debased to the meanest purposes.

Suppose, all our stately vessels, which pass and repass the ocean, were to carry out nothing but tinsel, and theatrical decorations; were to import nothing but glittering baubles, and nicely-fansied toys. Would such a method

* Matt. vii. 6.

of trading, be well-judged in itself, or beneficial in its consequences?—Articulate speech, is the instrument of a much nobler commerce; intended to transmit and diffuse the treasures of the mind. And will not the practice be altogether *as injudicious*, must not the issue be infinitely *more detrimental*, if this vehicle of intellectual wealth, is freighted only with pleasing fopperies?

Asp. Such folly and extravagance, would be hissed out of the comercial world. Why then are they admitted and cherished in the social?

Ther. Why indeed? he must be far more acute than your *Theron*, who can assign a single reason to countenance them. To explode them, ten thousand arguments occur.—A continual round of gay and trifling conversation, of visits quite modish, and entertainments not moral, must give an indolent turn to the mind. Such as will *enervate* its powers; and *sap* the very foundation of virtue.—Whereas, a frequent conference on the glories of the GODHEAD, or the wonders of Creation, would invigorate and enoble the soul. Would enlarge her faculties, and elevate her desires.

Asp. *Did not our heart burn within us*, said the travellers at *Emmaus*, *while he talked with us by the way?* Those discourses, 'tis true, were conducted with a spirit, and enforced with an energy, absolutely unequaled. Yet the same happy effects would, in *some* inferior degree, result from our friendly conferences, if they turned upon the same important points. We also should feel our hearts, *warmed* with holy zeal, and *glowing* with heavenly love.

Ther. Such conferences would not only be productive of present advantage; but yield a renewed pleasure, in the retrospect. We might *reflect*, with real complacency, on hours spent in so rational a manner. And who would not prefer the silent applause of the heart, far, far before those tumultuous joys: which wanton jests create, or the circling glass inspires?

Asp. One,* who thorougly knew mankind, and had tried the merits of the jovial board, compares such mirth to *cracking of thorns under a pot.*† The transient blaze of

* King Solomon. † Eccles. vii. 6.

the one, and senseless noise of the other, continue but for a moment; and expire, *that* in smoke and darkness, *this* in spleen and melancholy.

I said, spleen and melancholy.—For however jauntee and alert t e various methods of modish trifling may seem, whatever ease and grace they are supposed to give the conversation; sure I am, it will be afflictive, to *look back* upon interviews, squandered away in very vanity; and shocking, to *look forward* upon the account, which we must all shortly render.—What figure will *such* an article make, in the final reckoning, and at the decisive bar? "Our social hours, which might have promoted our mutual "edifications, and been subservient to our CREATOR's "glory, all lost in merriment and whim; or worse than "lost in flattery and detraction. A *blank*, or a *blot!*"

Ther. *Venus,* we find, has her zealous knight-errants, and *Bachus* his professed votaries, in almost every company. Is it not shameful and deplorable, that the GOD of nature alone, has none to assert his honor, none to celebrate his perfections? Though he is the *original* of all beauty, and the *parent* of all good.

When I have taken my morning walk, amidst dews and flowers; with the sun shedding lustre round him, and unveiling the happy landscape; how has my eye been charmed, with the lovely prospect! how has my ear been ravished, with the music of the grove! methought, every note was a *tribute* of harmony; and all nature seemed one *grand chorus,* swelling with the CREATOR's praise.—But, how has the scene been reversed; when leaving my rural elysium, I entered the haunts of men! where I saw faculties divine, meanly engaged in trifles. Where I heard the tongue, prompt to utter, and fluent to express, every thing but its MAKER's glory.

I assure you, I have often been chagrined on this occasion: and sometimes said within myself—"What! "shall *trifles* be regarded, and the MAJESTY of *heaven* "neglected? shall every friend, shall every visitant, receive his share of respect? and no acknowledgments be paid "to that incomprehensibly glorious BEING, who is "worthy, more than worthy, of all our veneration?"

Asp. This will be still more afflictive to an ingenuous mind if we consider, that the infinite and eternal GOD is *present* at all our interviews: vouchsafes to express his satisfaction, and acknowledge himself magnified; when, with admiration and love, we talk of his transcendent excellencies.—Nay: we are assured, that the LORD of all LORDS, not only hearkens, but keeps *a book of remembrance;* and will distinguish such persons, at the day of universal retribution. When the loose train of licentious talkers, are driven away as the despicable *chaff;* these shall be selected for his peculiar treasure, and numbered among the *jewels* of JEHOVAH.

Ther. If the gentlemen, who make high pretensions to reason, think themselves discharged from these doctrines of revelation; they should not forget *their own* scriptures.—A *philosopher* will tell them the duty of employing their time, as in the awful presence, and under the immediate inspection, of the Supreme Being.—An *orator* will shew them the egregious impropriety, of wasting their friendly interviews, in the fumes of drollery, or the froth of impertinence.

Asp. Who then, that is wise, would not habituate himself to a practice; which comes recommended by the voice of reason, and is enforced by the authority of GOD? A practice, which will administer *present good*—will afford *pleasing reviews*—and terminate in *everlasting honor?*

Ther. 'Tis strange, that subjects, which deserve to be received, as the universal topic, are almost universally banished from our discourse.—Was this cabinet enriched, with a series of antique medals, or a collection of the finest gems; my friends would naturally expect to be entertained, with a sight of those rarities, and an explanation of their meaning. Why should we not as naturally expect, and as constantly agree, to entertain each other with remarks on those admirable curiosities, which are deposited in the boundless musæum of the universe?

When a general has won some important victory, or an admiral has destroyed the enemy's fleet; every company resounds with their achievements; every tongue is the trumpet of their fame. And why should we not celebrate,

with equal delight and ardour, that ALMIGHTY hand, which formed the structure, and furnished the regions, of this stupendous system?

Esp. Especially, if to his *immensely glorious,* we add his *supremely amiable* perfections.—When the victorious commander is our most cordial friend: when he has professed the tenderest love; done us the most signal good; and promised us a perpetual enjoyment of his favours; it will be impossible to neglect such an illustrious and generous person. His name must be engraven upon our hearts; must slide insensibly into our tongues; and be as music to our ears.

Is not all this true, and in the most super-eminent degree, with regard to the blessed GOD?—Can greater *kindness* be exercised, or greater *love* be conceived; than to deliver up his own SON to torments and death, for the expiation of our sins?—Can *benefits,* more desirable, be granted; than to adopt us for his children, and sanctify us by his SPIRIT?—Can *promises,* more invaluable, be made; than those, which insure to us the preferments of heaven, and the riches of eternity?

All this is attested, concerning the Almighty MAJESTY, in the Scriptures of Truth. What a fund, therefore, for pleasing and delicate conversation, are *the Scriptures!*

Ther. Here also I have the pleasure of concurring with my Aspasio. Though I believe, he suspects me to be somewhat wavering or defective, in my veneration for the Scriptures.

Asp. No, Theron: I have a better opinion of your taste and discernment, than to harbour any such suspicion.

Ther. The scriptures are certainly an inexhaustible fund of materials, for the most delightful and ennobling discourse. When we consider the author of those sacred books—that they came originally from *heaven*—were dictated by *divine* wisdom—have the same *consummate* excellency, as the most finished works of creation—It is really surprizing, that we are not always searching, by study, by meditation, or converse, into one or other of those grand volumes.

Asp. When *Secker* preaches, or *Murray* pleads; the church is crouded, and the bar thronged. When *Spence* produces the refinements of criticism, or *Young* displays the graces of poetry; the press toils, yet is scarce able to supply the demands of the public.—Are we eager to hear, and impatient to purchase, what proceeds from such eloquent tongues, and masterly pens? And can we be *coldly indifferent*, when—not the most accomplished of mankind—not the most exalted of creatures—but the adorable AUTHOR of all Wisdom, speaks in his revealed word? Strange! that our attention does not *hang* upon the venerable accents, and our talk *dwell* upon the incomparable truths!

Ther. I admire, I must confess, the very *language* of the bible. In this, methinks, I discern a conformity, between the book of nature, and the book of scripture.

In the book of nature, the Divine TEACHER speaks not barely to the ears, but to all our senses. And it is very remarkable, how he *varies* his address!—Observe his grander works. In these, he uses the style of majesty. We may call it, the true *sublime*. It strikes with awe, and transports the mind —View his ordinary operations. Here, he descends to a plainer dialect. This may be termed, the *familiar* style. We comprehend it with ease, and attend to it with pleasure.—In the more ornamented parts of the Creation, he cloaths his meaning with elegance. All is rich and brilliant. We are delighted; we are charmed. And what is this, but the *florid* style?

A variety, somewhat similar, runs through the scriptures. Would you see *history*, in all her simplicity, and all her force; most beautifully easy, yet irresistibly striking? See her, or rather feel her energy, touching in the nicest movements of the soul, and triumphing over our passions; in the inimitable narrative of *Joseph's* life.—The representation of *Esau's* bitter distress;* the conversation-pieces of *Jonathan* and his gallant friend;† the memorable journal of the disciples going to *Emmaus*;‡ are finished models of

* Gen. xxvii. 30, &c. † 1 Sam. xviii, xix, xx.

‡ Luke xxiv. 13, &c.

the *impassioned* and *affecting*.—here is nothing studied; no flights of fancy; no embellishments of oratory. Yet how inferior is episod of *nisus* and *eurialus*, though worked up by the most masterly hand in the world, to the undissembled artless fervency of these scriptural sketches!

Are we pleased with the elevation and dignity of an *heroic poem*; or the tenderness and perplexity of a *dramatic* performance; in the book of *Job*, they are both united, and both unequal.—Conformably to the exactest rules of art, as the action advances, the incidents are more alarming, and the images more magnificent. The language glows and the pathos swells. Till, at last, the DEITY himself makes his entrance. He speaks from the whirlwind, and summons the Creation: summons heaven, and all its shining host; the elements, and their most wonderful productions to vouch for the wisdom of his providential dispensations.— His word strikes terror, and flashes conviction: decides the momentous controversy, and closes the august drama, with all possible propriety, solemnity, and grandeur.

If we sometimes choose a *plaintive* strain; such as softens the mind, and induces an agreeable melancholy: are any of the antient tragedies superior, in the eloquence of mourning, to *David's* pathetic elegy on his beloved *Jonathan*; to his most passionate and inconsolable moan, over the lovely but unhappy *Absalom*; or to that melodious woe, which warbles and bleeds, in every line of *Jeremiah's* lamentations?

Would we be entertained with the daring sublimity of *Homer*, or the correct majesty of *Virgil?* With the expressive delicacy of *Horace*, or the rapid excursions of *Pindar?* Behold them joined, behold them excelled, in the odes of *Moses*, and the eucharistic hymn of *Deborah* in the exalted devotion of the Psalms, and the glorious enthusiasm of the prophets.

Asp. Only with this difference, that the former are *tuneful triflers*, and amuse the fancy with empty fiction: the latter are teachers sent from GOD, and make the soul *wise unto salvation*.—The bible, is not only the brightest ornament, but the most invaluable depositum. On a right, a practical knowledge of these lively oracles, depends the

present comfort, and the endless felicity of mankind. Whatever, therefore, in study or conversation, has no connection with their divine contents; may be reckoned among the toys of literature, or the *cyphers* of discourse.

Ther. Here again the book of scripture is somewhat like the magazine of nature. What can we desire, for our accommodation and delight, which this store-house of conveniences does not afford? What can we wish for our edification and improvement, which that fund of knowledge does not supply? of these we may truly affirm, each; in its respective kind, *is profitable unto all things.*

Are we admirers of *antiquity?*—Here, we are led back, beyond the universal deluge, and far beyond the date of any other annals.—We are introduced among the earliest inhabitants of the earth. We take a view of mankind, in their undisguised primitive plainness; when the days of their life were but little short of a *thousand years.*—We are brought acquainted with the original of nations; with the creation of the world; and with the birth, of time itself.

Are we delighted with *vast* atchievements?—Where is any thing comparable to the miracles in *Egypt*, and the wonders in the field of *Zoan?* To the memories of the *Israelites*, passing through the depths of the sea; sojourning amidst the inhospitable deserts; and conquering the kingdom of *Canaan?*—Where shall we meet with instances of martial bravery, equal to the prodigious exploits of the *Judges*; or the adventurous deeds of *Jesse's* valiant Son, and his matchless band of worthies?*—Here, we behold the fundamental laws of the universe, sometimes suspended, sometimes reversed: and not only the current of *Jordan*, but the course of nature controuled. In short; when we enter the field of scripture, we tread on enchanted, shall I say? rather—on consecrated ground. Where astonishment and awe are awakened, at every turn. Where is all, more than all, the marvellous of romance; connected with all the precision and sanctity of truth.

* See 2 Sam. xxiii. 8, &c. 1 Chron. xi. 10, &c

If we want *maxims* of *wisdom*, or have a taste for the *laconic style*; how copiously may our wants be supplied, and how delicately our taste gratified! Especially in the book of Proverbs, Eclesiastes, and some of the minor prophets.—Here, are the most sage lessons of instruction; adapted to every circumstance of life; formed upon experience of all preceding ages; and perfected by the unerring SPIRIT of inspiration.—These delivered, with such remarkable conciseness; that one might venture to say, every word is a sentence; at least every sentence may be called an apothegm; sparkling with brightness of thought, or weighty with solidity of sense. The whole, like a profusion of pearls—each containing, in a very small compass, a value almost immense—all heaped up (as an ingenious critic speaks) with a confused magnificence, above the little niceties of order.

If we look for the *strength* of reasoning, and the *warmth* of exortation: the *insinuating arts* of genteel address, or the manly boldness of impartial reproof: all the thunder of the orator, without any of his ostentation; all the politeness of the courtier, without any of his flattery:—let us have recourse to the acts of the apostles, and to the epistles of St. *Paul*. These are a specimen, or rather these are the standard, of them all.

I do not wonder, therefore, that a taste so refined, and a judgment so correct as *Milton's*, should discern higher attractives in the volume of inspiration, than in the most celebrated authors of *Greece* and *Rome*.

—— Yet not the more
Cease I to wander, where the muses haunt
Clear spring, or shady grove, or sunny hill,
Smit with the love of sacred song: but CHIEF
Thee *Sion*, and the flow'ry banks beneath,
That wash thy hallowed feet, and warbling flow
Nightly I visit.*

* That is, "He still was pleased to study the beauties of the antient Poets; but his "highest delight was in the songs of *Sion*, in the holy scriptures, and in these he meditated day and night."——*See Dr. Newton's Edition.*

Asp. Another recommendation of the scriptures, is, that they afford the most awful and most amiable manifestations of the GODHEAD. His glory shines, and his goodness smiles, in those divine pages, with unparalleled lustre.—Here, we have a satisfactory explanation of *our own* State. The origin of evil is traced; the cause of all our misery discovered; and the remedy, the infalliable remedy, both clearly shewn, and freely offered.—The merits of the bleeding *JESUS*, lay a firm foundation for all our hopes; while gratitude for his dying love, suggests the most winning incitement to every duty.—Morality, *Theron*, your (and let me add *my*) admired morality, is delineated in all its branches. Is placed upon its proper basis, and raised to its highest elevation.—The SPIRIT of GOD is promised, to enlighten the darkness of our understandings, and strengthen the imbecillity of our wills. What an ample—can you indulge me, on this favourite topic?

Ther. It is, I assure you, equally pleasing to myself. Your enlargements, therefore, need no apology.

Asp. What ample provision is made, by these blessed books, for *all* our spiritual wants! and, in this respect, how indisputable is their superiority to all other compositions!

Is any one convinced of *guilt*, as provoking heaven, and ruining the soul?—Let him ask reason, to point out a means of reconcilation, and a refuge of safety. Reason hesitates, as she replies; "The DEITY *may*, perhaps, accept our supplications, and grant forgiveness."—But the scripture leaves us not to the sad uncertainty of conjecture. They speak the language of clear assurance. GOD *has* set forth a propitation:* he *does* forgive our iniquities:† he *will* remember our sins no more.‡

Are we *assaulted* by temptations, or *averse* to duty?—Philosophy may attempt to parry the thrust, or to stir up the reluctant mind; by disclosing the *deformity* of vice, and urging the *fitness* of things. Feeble expedients! just as well calculated, to accomplish the ends proposed; as the flimsy fortification of a cobweb, to defend us from the

* Rom iii. 25. † Psal. ciii. 3. ‡ Heb. viii. 12.

ball of a cannon; or, as the gentle vibrations of a lady's fan, to make a wind-bound navy sail.—The bible recommends no such incompetent succours. *My grace*, says its Almighty AUTHOR, *is sufficient for thee.**—*Sin shall not have dominion over you.*†—The great JEHOVAH, in whom is everlasting strength, *he worketh in us, both to will, and to do, of his good pleasure.*‡

Should we be visited with *sickness*, or overtaken by any *calamity*, the consolation which *Plato* offers, is; that such dispensations coincide with the universal plan of divine goverment. *Virgil* will tell us, for our relief;—that afflictive visitants are, more or less, the unavoidable lot of all men. Another moralist whispers in the dejected sufferer's ear, impatience adds to the load: whereas, a calm "submission renders it more supportable."—Does the word of revelation dispense such spiritless and fugitive cordials? no: those sacred pages inform us, that tribulations are fatherly chastisements; tokens of our MAKER'S love, and fruits of his care. That they are intended to work *in us*, the peaceable fruits of righteousness; and to work out *for us*, an eternal weight of glory.§

Should we, under the summons of *death*, have recourse to the most celebrated *comforters* in the heathen world; they would increase our apprehensions, rather than mitigate our dread. Death is represented, by the great masters of their schools; as "the most formidable of all evils." They were not able *positively* to determine, whether the soul survived; and never so much as dreamt of the resurrection of the body.—Whereas, the book of GOD strips the mon-

* 2 Cor. xii. 9. † Rom. vi. 14. ‡ Phil. ii. 13.

§ 2 Cor. iv. 17. What are *all* the consolatory expedients, prescribed in [illegible] of Heathen morality, compared with this *one* recipe of Revelation? They are, in point of cheering efficacy, somewhat like the *froth* on the conflux of a thousand streams, compared with a single draught of *Homer's Nepenthe*. Which, he tells us, was [illegible]

Temper'd with drugs of sovereign use t'asswage
The boiling bosom of tumultuous rage;
To clear the cloudy front of wrinkled care,
And dry the tearful sluices of despair.
Charm'd with that virtuous draught, th' exalted mind
All sense of woe delivers to the wind.——*Odyss.* IV.

ster of his horrors, or turns him into a messenger of peace: gives him an angel's face and a deliverer's hand. Ascertaining to the souls of the righteous, an immediate ranslation into the regions of bliss; and insuring to their bodies a most advantageous *revival*, at the restoration of all things.

Invaluable book! it heals the maladies of life, and subdues the fear of death. It strikes a lightsome vista, through the gloom of the grave; and opens a charming, a glorious prospect of immortality in the heavens.

These, with many other excellencies peculiar to the scriptures, one would imagine more than sufficient, to engage every sensible heart in their favour; and introduce them, with the highest esteem, into every improved conversation.—They had such an effect upon the finest genius, and *most accomplished* person, that former or latter ages can boast. Insomuch, that he made, while living, this public declaration; and left it, when he died, upon everlasting record—*How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey unto my mouth.**—*O! how I love thy law! it is my meditation all the day.*†—*Mine eyes prevent the night-watches, that I may be occupied in thy precepts; and I will speak of thy testimonies even before kings.*‡—If *David* tasted so much sweetness in a small, and that the *least valuable* part of the divine word; how much richer is the feast to us! Since the gospel is added to the law, and the canon of scripture completed! Since (to borrow the words of a prophet) the LORD GOD *has, now sealed up the sum*; has put the last hand to his work; and rendered it *full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty.*§

Ther. Another remarkable peculiarity of the sacred writings, just occurs to my mind—The method, of communicating advice, or administering reproof, by *parables.* A method, which levels itself to the lowest apprehension, without giving offence to the most supercilious temper. Yet, is as much superior, to plain unornamented precept; as the enlivened scenes of a well-wrought tragedy, are

* Psal. cxix. 103. † Psal. cxix. 97. ‡ Psal. cxix. 46.
§ Ezek. xxviii. 12.

more impressive and affecting, than a simple narration of the plot.

Our LORD was asked, by a student of the *Jewish* law, *Who is my neighbour?* which implied another question, *How is he to be loved?*—The enquirer was conceited of himself; yet, ignorant of the truth, and deficient in his duty. Had the wise INSTRUCTOR of mankind abruptly declared, *You neither know the former, nor fulfil the latter.* Probably, the querist would have reddened with indignation, and departed in a rage.—Therefore, to teach, and not disgust; to *convince* the man of his error, and not *exasperate* his mind; the blessed *JESUS* frames a reply, as amiable in the manner, as it was pertinent to the purpose.

A certain *Jew*, going down from *Jerusalem* to *Jericho*, fell among thieves.* They rifle him of his money; strip him of his clothes; wound him with great barbarity; then leave him, expiring on the road.—Soon after this disastrous accident, a traveller appears, and advances that way. A sight, inexpressibly welcome to this afflicted creature.—What renders it more likely that he shall receive relief, this traveller is one of the *sacred order*. One, who taught others the lovely lessons of humanity and charity; and was, therefore, under the strongest obligations, to exemplify them in his own practice. He just glances an eye upon the deplorable object; sees him stretched on the ground, and weltering in his blood. But takes no farther notice. Nay, to avoid the trouble of an enquiry, turns out of the road, and passes by on the other side.—Scarce was he departed, when a *Levite* approaches. This man *comes nearer, and looks on* the miserable spectacle. He takes a leisurely and attentive survey of the case. Though every gash, and every groan, plead for compassion; this minister of the sanctuary observes all, with the coldest indifference. He neither moves a hand to help him; nor speaks a word to comfort him; but leaves the poor, naked, mangled wretch to perish in his calamity.—Last comes a *Samaritan*; one of the abhorred nation: whom the *Jew* hated with the most

* Luke x. 30, &c.

implacable malignity. Though the *Levite* had neglected a bleeding brother: though the priest had with-held his pity, from one of the LORD's peculiar people: the very moment this *Samaritan* sees the unhappy sufferer, he melts into commiseration. He forgets the *embittered foe*, and considers only the *distressed fellow-creature.* He springs from his horse, and resolves to intermit his journey. The oil and wine, intended for his own refreshment, he freely converts into healing unguents. He binds up the wounds; sets the disabled stranger, upon his own beast; and with all the assiduity of a servant, with all the tenderness of a brother, conducts him to an inn.—There, he does all that can be contrived, to sooth his present sorrows, and to provide against his future wants. He lays down, for his immediate use, what money he can spare; charges the host to omit nothing, that may promote the recovery or comfort of his guest; and promises, to defray the whole expence of his lodging, his maintenance, and his cure.

What a lively picture this, of the most *disinterested* and *active* benevolence! a benevolence, which excludes no persons, not even strangers or enemies, from its tender regards. Which disdains no condescension, grudges no cost, in its labours of love.—Could any method of conviction have been more forcible, and at the same time more pleasing, than the interrogatory, proposed by our LORD, and deduced from the story? *Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him, that fell among the thieves?*—Or, can there be an advice, more suitable to the occasion; more important in its nature; and expressed with a more sententious energy, than *Go thou, and do likewise?*—In this case, the learner instructs, the delinquent condemns,* himself. *Bigotry* bears away its prejudice; and *Pride* (when the moral so sweetly, so imperceptibly insinuates) even pride itself lends a willing ear to admonition.

Asp. This eloquence of similitudes, is at once affecting to the wise, and intelligible to the ignorant.—It *shews*, ra-

* 2 Sam, xii. v.

ther than *relates*, the point to be illustrated; and often makes, as in the fine instance you have selected, the feelings of the heart overcome the prejudices of the understanding.—It has always been admired, by the best judges of human na ure, and polite literature. But, never was carried to its highest perfection, till our LORD spoke the parable of the *Prodigal.**—Which has a beauty, that no paraphrase can heighten: a perspicuity, that renders all interpretation needless: and a force, which every reader, not totally insensible, must feel.†

Ther. The condescension and goodness of GOD are, every where, conspicuous.—In the productions of the bough, he conveys to us the most valuable fruits, by the intervention of the loveliest blossoms. Though the present is, in itself, extremely acceptable; he has given it an *additional endearment*, by the beauties which array it, or the perfumes which surround it.—In the pages of Revelation, he has communicated to us the truths of heaven, adorned with all the graces of composition. Such as may polish the man of genius, and improve the man of worth. Such as gratify and captivate our imagination, even while they cultivate and refine our morals.—So that they really are, as one of their divine authors very elegantly speaks; *Like apples of gold in pictures of silver.*

Asp. Who then would not gladly receive that gracious exhortation? *Let the word of CHRIST dwell in you richly.* Who would not willingly obey that benign command? *Thou shalt talk of it, when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way; when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.*‡ Since, in this case, duty is evidently inlaid with delight.

When I consider the *language* of the scriptures, and sometimes experience their energy on my soul; I am in-

* Luke xv. 11, &c.

† If the reader should be dissatisfied with this method of extolling the parable in general, without specifying its particular beauties; he may find something of the latter kind attempted, in Contemplations on the Starry Heavens, page 181, &c.

‡ Deut. vi. 7.

clined to say—"Other writings, though polished with the "nicest touches of art, only *tinkle* on the ear, or affect us "like the shepherd's reed. But these, even amidst all "their simplicity and negligence, *strike—alarm—trans-* "*port us*—somewhat like the voice of thunder, or the "archangel's trumpet."

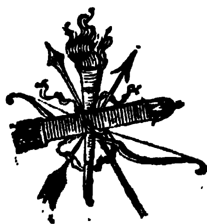
When I consider the *contents* of the scriptures; and believe myself interested, in the promises they exhibit, and the privileges they confer; I am induced to cry out—"What are all the other books in the world, compared "with these inestimable volumes? No more than an en-"tertaining novel, or a few prudential rules for domestic "oeconomy, compared with a *parent's* will; a *royal* char-"ter; or an *imperial* grant of titles and manors."

I said, *promises* and *privileges*. For, these I look upon, as imparting the most sovereign worth to the scriptures. Agreeably to our LORD's testimony, *Search the scriptures*. Why? what recommends them to our attentive regard? Because they give the noblest display of the divine perfections, and the truest estimate of human nature? Because they open the invisible world, and discover the secrets of eternity? present us with the most refined rule of duty, and press upon us the most forcible motives to obedience?—All this they unquestionably do. Yet this is not their most distinguishing excellence. *Search them*, says our blessed LORD, with a close, an exact, an unwearied assiduity; because, *they testify of ME*. Of my all-surpassing dignity, and infinite merits. Of free justification through my blood, and everlasting life through my righteousness.—This is their crowning perfection. From hence they derive the most exalted merit.

All these circumstances remind me of a very emphatical attestation, bore to the exalted merit of the BIBLE. Which, though quite *artless*, is, I think, abundantly more expressive, than the most laboured efforts of panegyric.—It came from the lips of a martyr. Who, being condemned to die, for his inviolable adherence to the doctrines of scripture; when he arrived at the stake, and had composed himself for execution, took his final leave in these affecting words: "Farewell sun and moon! farewell all the beauties of cre-

" ation, and comforts of life! farewell my honored friends! " farewell my beloved relations! and farewell thou *preci-* " *ous, precious book of* God!"

Aspasio had scarce uttered the last sentence, when a servant came to let them know; " Supper was upon the " table."—Very opportunely, said *Theron*, has our repast waited, till our conference is ended. We have shewed, what a large field of delightful speculation, the scriptures open: and what ample materials for the most refined discourse, they afford. As nothing can be more ungraceful, than to neglect in *our own* conduct, what we recommend to the practice of *others*; let us, this very night, begin to ennoble our interviews with these improving subjects. Let us endeavour to make religious conversation, which is in all respects *desirable*, in some degree *fashionable*.





DIALOGUE II.



THE next morning, when breakfast was over, *Theron* and *Aspasio* took a walk into the garden—Their spirits cheared, and their imagination lively—Gratitude glowing in their hearts, and the whole creation smiling round them.

The spot adjoining to the house, was appropriated to the cultivation of *flowers*.—In a variety of handsome compartments, were assembled the choicest beauties of blooming nature. Here, the *hyacinth* hung her silken bells, or the *lilies* reared their silver pyramids. There, stood the neat *narcissus*, loosely attired in a mantle of snowy lustre; while the splendid *ranunculus* wore a full-trimmed suit of radiant scarlet. *Pinks* were rising to enamel the borders; *roses* were opening to dress the walls; surrounded, on all sides, with a profusion of beauteous forms, either latent in the stalk, or bursting the buds, or blown into full expansion.

This was bounded by a slight partition, a sort of verdant parapet. Through which they descend by an easy flight of steps; and are presented with the elegant simplicity of the *kitchen garden*.—In one place, you might see the marigold flowering, or the beans in blossom. In another, the endive curled her leaves, or the lettuce thickened her tufts. Cauliflowers sheltered their fair complection, under a green umbrella; while the borage dishevelled* her locks, and braided them with native jewels, of a finer azure than the finest sapphires.—On the *sunny slopes*, the cucumber and



* Referring to the loose irregular manner of its foliation.

melon lay basking in the collected beams. On the *raised beds*, the artichoke seemed to be erecting a standard, while the asparagus shot† into ranks of spears. The *level ground* produced all manner of cooling sallets and nourishing esculents. Which, like the brows of the *olympic* conquerors, were bound with a fillet of unfading parsley; or, like the pictures of the mountain-nymphs, were graced with a chaplet of fragrant marjoram.—In short, nothing was wanting to furnish out the wholesome luxury of an *antediluvian* banquet.

Soon, a high wall intervenes. Through which a wicket opens, and transmits them into the regular and equi-distant rows of an *orchard*.—This plantation is o snicely adjusted, that it looks like an arrangement of rural piazzas, or a collection of diversified vistas. The eye is, every where, entertained with the exactest uniformity; and darts, with unobstructed ease, from one end of the branching files to the other.—On all the boughs, lay a lovely evolution of *blossoms;* arrayed in milky white, or tinged with the softest red. Crouding into one general cluster, without relinquishing a vacant space for leaves, they formed the fairest, the gayest, the grandest alcove, that fancy itself can imagine.—It is really like the *court* of the *graces*. None can approach it, without finding his ideas brightened, and feeling his temper exhilarated.

Contigious to this correct disposition of things, nature has thrown a *wilderness*; hoary, grotesque, and magnificently confused. It stretched itself, with a large circular sweep, to the north; and secured both the olitory and the orchard from incommoding winds.—Copses of hazel and flowering shrubs, filled the lower spaces. While poplars quivered aloft in air, and pines pierced the clouds with their leafy spires. Here grew clumps of fir, clad in everlasting green. There, stood groves of oak, which had weathered, for ages, the wintry storm.—This woody theatre, was intersected by a *winding walk;* lined with elms of

† Alluding, not only to the shape, but also to the growth of this plant; which is so unusually quick, that it may almost be said to start, rather than to rise out of the earth.

insuperable height, Whose branches, uniting at the top, reared a majestic arch, and projected a solemn shade. It was impossible to enter this lofty labyrinth, without being struck with a pleasing dread. As they proceed, every inflection diffuses a deeper gloom, and awakens a more pensive attention.

Having strolled in this darksome avenue, without a speck of sunshine, without a glimpse of the heavens; on a sudden, they step into open day.—Surprising! cries *Aspasio*. What a change is this! What delightful enchantment is here!—One instant, whelmed in *Trophonius's* cave;* where darkness lours, and horror frowns. Transported, the next, into the romantic scenes of *Arcadia;* where all is lightsome, and all is gay.—Quick as thought,† the arches of heaven expand their azure. Turrets and spires shoot into the skies. Towns, with their spacious edifices, spread themselves to the admiring view. Those lawns, green with freshest herbage; those fields, rich with undulating corn; where were they all, a moment ago?—It brings to my mind that remarkable situation of the *Jewish* law-giver; when, elevated on the summit of *Pisgah*, he surveyed the goodly land of promise—surveyed *the rivers, the floods, the brooks of honey and butter*—surveyed *the mountains droping with wine, and the hills flowing with milk.*‡ Surveyed

* The reader may find a curious account of this cave, together with a very humorous, and (which should always accompany humour, or else it will be like a sting without the honey) an improving description of its effects.——SPECT. Vol. VIII. No. 598, 599.

† Such a sudden alteration of the prospect, is beautifully described by Milton;

As when a scout,
Through dark and desart ways, with peril gone
All night, at last by break of chearful dawn
Obtains the brow of some high-climbing hill,
Which to his eye discovers unaware
The goodly prospect of some foreign land,
First seen; or some renown'd metropolis,
With glistering spires and pinnacles adorn'd,
Which now the rising sun gilds with his beams.—BOOK III.

‡ This is the language of the book of Job, and the prophecy of Joel. A language, like the scene it describes, not beautifully only, but beautiful and rich even to luxuriancy, Job xx. 17. Joel iii. 18.

all with those eyes, which, for forty tedious years, had been confined to dry sands, ragged rocks, and the irksome wastes of a desolate howling wilderness.

On the first *mossy hillock*, which offered its couch, our gentlemen seated themselves. The rising sun had visited the spot, to dry up the dews, and exhale the damps, that might endanger health; to open the violets, and expand the primroses, that decked the green. The whole shade of the wood was collected *behind* them; and a beautiful, extensive, most diversified landscape spread itself *before* them.

Theron, according to his usual manner, made many improving remarks on the prospect, and its furniture. He traced the footsteps of an all-comprehending contrivance, and pointed out the strokes of inimitable skill. He observed the grand exertions of power, and the rich exuberance of goodness, most signally, most charmingly conspicuous through the whole.—Upon one circumstance he enlarged with a particular satisfaction.

Ther. See! *Aspasio;* how all is calculated, to administer the highest *delight* to mankind.—Those trees and hedges, which skirt the extremities of the landscape; stealing away from their real bulk, and lessening by gentle diminutions; appear like elegant pictures in *miniature*. Those, which occupy the nearer situations, are a set of noble images; swelling upon the eye, in *full proportion;* and in a variety of graceful attitudes. Both of them ornamenting the several apartments of our common abode, with a mixture of delicacy and grandeur.

The blossoms, that array the branches; the flowers, that embroider the mead; address and entertain *our* eyes with every charm of beauty. Whereas, to *other* creatures, they are destitute of all those attractives; which result from a combination of the loveliest colours, and most alluring forms.—Yonder streams, that glide, with smooth serenity, along the vallies; glittering to the distant view, like sheets of polished silver; or soothing the attentive ear, with the softness of aquatic murmurs; are no less *exhilarating* to the fancy, than to the soil, through which they pass.—The huge enormous mountain; the steep and dizzy precipice;

the pendent horrors of the craggy promontory: wild and tremendous as they are, furnish out an agreeable entertainment to the human mind; and *please*, even while they *terrify*. Whereas, the beasts take no other notice of those majestic deformities, than only to avoid the dangers, they threaten.

Asp. How do such considerations exalt our idea of the CREATOR's goodness; his very distinguishing goodness to mankind! Should they not proportionably endear that eternal Benefactor; and render him, both the supreme desire of our souls, and the supreme delight of our affections?

His ever-bountiful hand has scattered blessings, and with profuse liberality, among *all* the ranks of animated existence. But his beneficence to *us*, is of the most engaging kind; is of a very superior order. *We* are treated as his peculiar favorites; being admitted to the knowledge of his designs, as well as to the use of his works. We are introduced to scenes of beauty, which none but ourselves are able to discern. We are presented with a series of gratifications, which none but ourselves are capable of relishing.

Ther. Another remark, though very obvious, is equally important. The destination of all these external things, is no less *advantageous*, than their formation is beautiful.—Their bloom, which engages the eye with its delicate hues, is cherishing the embrio fruit; and forming, within its silken folds, the rudiments of a future dessert.—Those streams, which shine from afar, like fluid crystal, are more valuable in their productions, and beneficial in their services, than they are amiable in their appearance. They distribute, as they roll along their winding banks, cleanliness to our houses, and fruitfulness to our lands. They nourish, and at their own expense, a never-failing supply of the finest fish. They visit our cities, and attend our wharfs, as so many public vehicles, ready to set out at all hours.

Those sheep, which give their udders to be drained by the busy frisking lambs, are fattening their flesh for *our* support; and while they fill their own fleeces, are providing for *our* comfortable cloathing.—Yonder kine, some ..

which are browzing upon the tender herb; others, satiated with pasturage, ruminate under the shady covert; are, though conscious of no such design, concocting for our use one of the softest, purest, healthiest liquors in the world.—The Bees, that fly humming about our seat, and pursue their work on the fragrant blossoms, are collecting balm and sweetness, to compose the richest of syrups. Which, though the produce of *their toil*, is intended for *our good*.

Nature, and her whole family, are our obsequious servants, our ever-active labourers. They bring the fruits of their united industry, and pour them into our lap, or deposit them in our store-rooms.

Asp. Who can sufficiently admire this most charming and immense benignity?—The Supreme DISPOSER of events, has commanded delight and profit to walk hand in hand, through his ample creation. Making all things so *perfectly pleasing*, as if beauty was their only end: yet all things so *eminently serviceable*, as if usefulness had been their sole design.—As a farther invitation to our gratitude, he has rendered man the center, in which all the emanations of his beneficence, diffused through this terrestrial system, constantly terminate.

But, my dear Theron, is not this apparent, in a much more wonderful manner, throughout the whole oeconomy of REDEMPTION?—It were a small thing for this inferior class of *unintelligent* creatures, to be continually employing themselves for our benefit. Even the *SON* of the most *High GOD*, through all his incarnate state, acted the very same part.—He took flesh, and bore the infirmities of human nature, not for himself, but for us men, and our salvation. He suffered want, and endured misery in all its forms; that we might possess the fulness of joy, and abound in pleasures for evermore.—When he poured out his soul in agonies, under the curse of an *avenging* law; was it not with a compassionate view, to make *us* partakers of eternal blessedness? When he fulfilled, perfectly fulfilled the whole *commanding* law; was it not for this gracious purpose, that his righteousness might be imputed to us? yes;

For us he liv'd,
Toil'd for our eafe, and for our fafety bled.

Nothing in the whole course———

Ther. Pardon me for interrupting you, Aspasio. I have no objection to the general drift of your discourse. But that particular notion of *imputed* righteousness, has always appeared to me in a very ridiculous light. And I must say, that such a *puritanical nostrum* makes a very unbecoming figure, amongst your other manly and correct sentiments of religion.

Asp. You know, Theron, I have long ago disavowed that ignoble prejudice, which rejects doctrines, or despises persons, because they happen to be branded with contemptible names. 'Tis true, the writers styled *Puritans,* are remarkable for their attachment to this peculiarity of the gospel. It runs through all their theological works; and very eminently distinguishes them, from the generality of our modern treatises.—But, must it *therefore* be wrong, because maintained by that particular set of people? or, are they the *only* advocates for this important truth?

Ther. Aye: it is as I suspected. I have lately conjectured, from several hints in my Aspasio's discourse, that he has been warping to the low ungentleman-like peculiarities of those whimsical fanatics.

Asp. I cannot conceive, why you should call them *whimsical.*—To settle faith on its proper basis, the meritorious righteousness of the REDEEMER; and to deduce obedience from its true origin, the love of GOD shed abroad in the heart.—To search the conscience, and convince the judgment—to awaken the lethargic, and comfort the afflicted soul—to do all this, from a thorough knowledge, joined to a masterly application, of the divine word —these, sure, are not whimsical talents, but *real* excellencies. Yet these, if we may credit history, entered into the preaching; these, if we will examine impartially, are to be found in the writings of the Puritans.—And a pearl, you will please to remember, is a pearl still, though it should hang in the *Ethiopian's* ear.

Ther. Ethiopian indeed! you have truly characterized,

that *demure* and *gloomy* generation. I hope, you don't intend to introduce their affected solemnity and forbidding reserve into your own easy and engaging conversation. Though, for aught I can judge, this would be no more ungraceful, than to patch such aukward and antiquated notions, on the refined scheme of christianity.

Asp. My dear friend, you are too ludicrous; and I begin to catch the infection. Away with your wit, I beseech you. Or, if you must have it in your retinue, let it be your page, not your privy-counsellor. Let it wait at the door, not preside at our councils.—We had better return to our first topic. Let us contemplate the wonders of creation; and as we admire the works, learn to adore the MAKER.

Ther. None of your evasions; good Aspasio. You must not think to put me off at this rate. I have wanted an opportunity to rally you upon this head; and to argue or laugh you, out of these *religious oddities*.

Asp. If you will not agree to terms of peace; I hope you will allow some cessation of arms. At least, till I can muster my forces, and prepare for the vindication of my principles.

Ther. No: upon the spot, and out of hand, you are required to answer for yourself, and these same queer opinions.—I shall serve you, as the *Roman* consul* served the *procrastinating* monarch.† When, demurring about his reply to the demands of the senate, he said, "he would "consider of the matter:" the resolute ambassador drew a circle round him with his cane, and insisted upon a positive answer, before he stepped over those limits.

Asp. This, however, you must give me leave to observe, that the affair is of a very serious nature. Upon condition, that you will dismiss you flourishes of humour, and strokes of satyre; I will acquaint you with the reasons, which have made me a convert to this doctrine.--Once, I held it in the utmost contempt; and pitied the simplicity of (as I then styled them) its *deluded* admirers. But, I am now become such a fool, that I may be truly wise, and sub-

* *Popilius Lenas.* † *Antiochus*, king of Syria.

stantially happy. I have seen my ruined state; and I bless GOD for this sovereign restorative. It is the source of my strongest consolations, and the very foundation of my eternal hopes.

Ther. Excuse me, Aspasio; if the vivacity of my temper, and the seemingly uncouth tenet, kindled me into a more humorous gaiety, than became the occasion. You speak to the point, with so much seriousness, and in such weighty terms, as check my levity, and command my respect. Be pleased to execute, what you have promised; and the most *engaged* attention of my mind, shall atone for the *petulant* sallies of my tongue.

Asp. To conceive a dislike of any doctrine, only because persons of a particular denomination, have been active and zealous to promote its reception; this is hardly consistent with an impartial enquiry after truth.

Ther. I grant it, Aspasio. And I should be ashamed of my opposition, if it was founded on so slight a bottom. But, abstracted from all party considerations, I can see nothing in this supposed article of our faith, which may recommend it to the unprejudiced enquirer.—What can be more aukward than the term, or more *irrational* than the sentiment?

Asp. The word *imputed*, when used in this connection, may possibly convey a disagreeable sound to the ears of some people. Because, they look upon it, as the peculiar phraseology of a few *superstitious sectarists;* and reject it, merely on the foot of that unreasonable surmise.—But how can *you* be disgusted at the expression, Theron; who have so often read it, in the most approved and judicious writers? St. *Paul*, who might affirm with relation to his epistles, much more truly than the painter concerning his portraits, *I write for eternity;* scruples not to use this aukward language, several times in the same chapter. *Milton*, the correctness of whose taste, and the propriety of whose style, no person of genius will ever question; delights to copy, in various parts of his incomparable poem, the apostle's diction.—Authorized by *such* precedents, it is superior to cavil, and warranted beyond all exception.

As to the sentiment, I take it to be the *very fundamental*

article of the gospel: and I believe, whoever is acquainted with ecclesiastical affairs, will allow, that it was the most mortal arrow in the heart of *Popery*, and the principal pillar in the establishment of the *Reformation*.—What says our LORD, with regard to the love of GOD, and the love of our neighbour? *On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets*. Much the same would I venture to say, concerning the imputation of our sins to *CHRIST*, and the imputation of *CHRIST's* righteousness to us: on *these two* doctrines, hang all the privileges and the whole glory of the gospel.

Ther. In our last conversation, I must own, I saw a strong resemblance between the works and the word of GOD. But I never observed any thing in nature, that bore the least *analogy* to imputed sin, or imputed righteousness.—To me your two doctrines seem strange, unaccountable, and irrational.

Asp. That our sins should be charged upon the only begotten SON of GOD, and that his righteousness should be imputed to sinful worms, is strange, exceeding strange The psalmist calls it, *marvellous loving-kindness*.* The apostle styles it, *love that passeth knowledge*.† And it has sometimes, I must freely confess, been almost ready to stagger my belief.—However, I have found myself relieved in this perplexity, not only by the testimonies of scripture, but even from the contemplation of nature. Is not all nature full of strange, unaccountable, and mysterious effects?

Ther. That nature is full of strange effects, is undeniable. Strange are the experiments of *electricity*, and the occult qualities of the *load-stone!* Strange and surprising are those countless legions of *effluvia*, which transpire from a small odoriferous body! More surprising still, are the infinite myriads of *luminous* particles, which issue from a smaller flaming substance.—There's not a tree, or a twig, or a leaf, but surpasses the comprehension of all mankind. Even the minutest atom, is big with wonders.

* Psal. xvii. 7. † Eph. iii. 19.

Take a nearer instance. This cow, which comes grazing up to our very feet. What is her food? grass; nothing but grass, the wild production of the earth. Give the same materials to the confectioner, the cook, or the most skilful artist in the world. They, with all their application and industry, will never be able to work them up into a palatable dish, or any serviceable substance. Whereas this poor animal, without so much as thinking on her business, refines and concocts them, in the most perfect manner. The juices of so contemptible an herb, *compounded* and *secreted* in her body, harden into bone, and soften into flesh: grow tough, as a cord, in the sinews; and become tender, as a jelly, in the fat. They ooze through the udder, and form a delicious stream of milk; they flow along the veins, in reeking tides of blood. Here, they take a crimson stain; there, they equal the lily in whiteness; on the skin and in the hair, they transform themselves into every variety of colours.

Asp. Pray can you account for *all* these extraordinary transmutations? Or, not to task your philosophy too heavily, can you tell us, how one—only *one* of them is wrought? How the coarse and bitter herbage, chewed and concocted by this dumb creature, is converted into so rich a dainty as cream?

Ther. As well may our sight penetrate the center of the globe, as philosophy explain this, and many other such secrets. The operations of nature, are nice and delicate, beyond all parallel, and beyond all conception. Insomuch, that the *intelligent* observer, can no where cast his eye, or fix his thoughts, without being astonished, transported, and even lost in admiration.

Asp. Are not then the operations of nature, so many vouchers for the mysterious truths of christianity? Since the procedure of Providence in this visible system, is a continued series of stupendous and unsearchable operations; need we be alarmed, can we reasonably be offended, if the scheme of redemption is equally stupendous, is far more amazing? Yet though *amazing*, I hope it will not appear, what you was pleased to insinuate, irrational.

Suppose, we state the signification of the *terms;* and ad-

just the boundaries of our subject, before we enter upon a survey of its contents?

Ther. Such a caution would have prevented, at least have shortened, many a vehement and tedious controversy. —You see, on yonder heath, the preparations for an approaching race. There stand the *posts*, which are to mark out the limits of the course. Without this previous restrictive care, how irregular would be the excursions of the contending steeds! How *difficult*, rather how *impossible*, to declare the conqueror, and award the prize!—A clear definition of terms, seems equally necessary for candid disputants. Without it, they may wrangle for ages, yet never come to a determination.

Asp. We were lately considering the transcendent excellency of the scriptures. Here we have a most striking and capital exemplification of the subject.—The light of nature might teach us somewhat, relating to the justification of man in a state of innocence. But it knows nothing of the method, whereby *fallen* and guilty man, may be justified in the sight of GOD. This is a secret, hid from all the researches of reason, and from all the sages of antiquity. To the prophets and apostles alone, we owe the discovery of this mine—this rich and inexhaustible mine, of holy consolation and heavenly treasure.

Ther. I wait for a specimen of your treasure, or a definition of your favorite point.

Asp. *Justification* is an act of GOD's almighty grace; whereby he acquits sinners from their guilt, and accounts them righteous;* for the sake of *CHRIST's* righteousness, wrought out for them, and imputed to them.

Ther. Two of your terms want some farther explanation What do you understand by *CHRIST's righteousness*, and what is the meaning of *imputed?*

Asp. By *CHRIST's* righteousness I understand, the whole of his *active* and *passive* obedience; springing from the perfect holiness of his heart; continued through every

* Should any reader object to the definition; apprehending, that justification implies more than *the pardon of sin*, I would desire him to suspend his judgment till he has perused *Dialogue* X. where this point is more circumstantially considered.

stage of his life; and extending to the very last pang of his death.—By the word *imputed*, I would signify, that this righteousness, though performed by our LORD, is placed to our account; is reckoned or adjudged by GOD as *our own*. Insomuch, that we may plead it, and rely on it, for the pardon of our sins; for the communication of grace; and for the enjoyment of life eternal. Shall I illustrate my meaning by a well-attested fact?

Ther. Nothing gives us so easy a conception of any difficult point, as this method of explaining, by *parallel* facts, or proper similitudes.

Asp. I don't say the case is parallel. I only produce it, to aid our conceptions.—*Onesimus*, you know, was *Philemon's* slave.* He had perfidiously deserted his master's service, and still more perfidiously stole his goods. The fugitive, in his guilty rambles, providentially meets with St. *Paul*. He is charmed and captivated with that gracious gospel, which proclaims mercy even for the vilest of sinners. He becomes a sincere convert to the religion of *JESUS*, and is received into the spiritual patronage of the apostle. Who, being informed of his dishonest conduct, and obnoxious state, undertakes to bring about a reconciliation, with his offended master: dispatches him, for this purpose, with a letter to *Philemon*: and, amongst other persuasives, writes thus in the poor criminal's behalf; *If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee aught, put that on mine account.* I Paul *have written it with mine own hand; I will repay it.*

That, which the zealous preacher of christianity *offered*, the adored AUTHOR of christianity *executed*.—We had revolted from the LORD of all lords, and broke his holy commandments. The SON of GOD, infinitely compassionate, vouches to become our mediator. That nothing might be wanting, to render his mediation successful, he places himself in our stead. The punishment, which *we*

* See the Epistle to Philemon.

deserved, *he* endures. The obedience, which *we* owed, *he* fulfils.—Both which, being imputed to us, and accepted for us, are the foundation of our pardon, are the procuring cause of our justification.

Ther. Is this the exact signification of the original word, which we translate *imputed?*

Asp. In the book of *Numbers,* we meet with this phrase; and in such a connection, as clears up its meaning.—JEHOVAH enacts a decree concerning the *Levites;* who had no vintages to gather, nor any harvests to reap; only the tythes of both, to receive. The tenth part of these their tythes, he directs them to present, in the form of a heave-offering: adding, *And this your heave-offering shall be* reckoned * unto *you, as though it were the corn of the threshing-floor, and as the fulness of the wine-press:* as satisfactory to me, and as beneficial to you, as if it was the tenth of your own labours, and the tythe of your own increase.—So, the expiatory sufferings, which CHRIST endured: the complete obedience, which he performed; are *reckoned to* true believers. *As though* the former were sustained in their own persons, and the latter fulfilled in their own lives. Are altogether *as effectual,* for obtaining their salvation, as if they were their own personal qualifications.

Ther. The imputation mentioned in your passage, is the imputation or something done by the *Levites* themselves, not of something done by *another.* This, I apprehend, is the true import of the word, when it occurs affirmatively in scripture.

Asp. This is *always* the import—should have been said, in order to make the objection forcible. But you could not so soon forget the instance, just now alledged.

St. *Paul,* speaking of the crimes, which *Onesimus* had committed; and of the injuries, which *Philemon* had sustained; says, " Charge them all on me. The original is, " *impute* them all to me. The meaning is, I will be re-" sponsible for all. As much as if the whole guilt had

* Numb. xviii. 27.

" been of my own contracting."§—Here is supposed, not the imputation of something done by the apostle *himself*, but of *another's* criminal behaviour.

What is written in the law, and what is written in the gospel? in both these places, how readest thou?—In the gospel, I read; that *righteousness is imputed without works.*‡ This utterly excludes every thing performed, or acquired, by the party himself.—Besides; we are assured, that GOD *justifies the ungodly;** those, who have nothing of their own, but abominable iniquities. To those, therefore, something else must necessarily be imputed, besides their own personal deeds.

Under the law, *Aaron* is commanded to *put the iniquities* of *Israel* upon the scape-goat.†—The same sentiment is reinculcated, when the goat is said to *bear the iniquities* of the people.‖ This was plainly an imputation; yet could not possibly be the imputation of any thing done by the devoted animal.—The *effects* which took place upon the execution of this ordinance, indicate a translation of guilt. For, the congregation was cleansed, but the goat polluted. The congregation *so cleansed*, that their iniquities were conveyed away, and to be found no more. The goat *so polluted*, that it communicated defilement to the man, who conducted it into " the land not inhabited."—All this was GOD's own appointment; and designed, like the whole system of *Mosaic* ceremonies, to instruct his church in the knowledge of the great MEDIATOR. In the knowledge of that wonderful method, whereby we have redemption from our sins, and righteousness unto life.

Ther. If this is your meaning, Aspasio; I am apt to think, it will be a difficult matter to make me a proselyte. I must be content to pass for one of the stiff-necked gene-

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§ Thus we may suppose our LORD speaking; " These poor sinners have wronged " thee, O FATHER, by their unrighteousness and ungodliness They owe thee an in- " conceivably vast sum. A debt of consummate obedience, and complete satisfaction. " *Put it all on my account. I JESUS have written it with my own hand: I will repay it.* " Now I give my bond; and, in the fulness of time, *Lo! I come, to* fulfil my engage- " ment."

‡ Rom. iv. 6. * Rom. iv 5. † Lev. xvi. 21. ‖ Lev. xvi. 22.

ration. Since, I can see neither wisdom nor equity, in ascribing to a person what he has not; or imputing to him, what he does not.

Asp. It was not Aspasio, but his friend, who set out with a view of making proselytes. If I can maintain my ground, and vindicate my own belief, it will be no inconsiderable acquisition.—However, I shall not despair of seeing the partner of my heart, become a sharer of my faith. When we are convinced of our *numberless* sins; when we feel the *depravity* of our nature; and begin to discern the *inconceivable* sanctity of our JUDGE; THEN, perhaps, this exploded article may be found worthy of acceptance—its constitution admired, as the wisdom of GOD—and its privilege coveted, as the consolation of our souls.

Ther. I shall wave at present, an examination of each particular; and only make some *remote* observations. Which seem, nevertheless, pretty nearly to affect your scheme.—Some persons, I dare be positive, have not so much as heard of your terms; and many more have not the least acquaintance with your doctrine. Will you strike off all these from the list of christians? Will you condemn all these as desperate infidels?

Asp. Not heard of them!—In a protestant nation! where the gospel is publicly preached, and the bible in every one's hand!—This, if true, is much to be lamented.

In answer to your question—It is not my custom, much less is it my prerogative, to *condemn* others. Has GOD committed all judgment unto me? that I should presume to anticipate the decisive sentence, or launch the thunderbolts of eternal vengeance?—Neither do I affirm the condition of such persons to be desperate. There may be those, who have no *explicit* knowledge of the doctrine, who are even *prejudiced* against the expressions; yet live under the belief of the truth, and in the exercise of the duty.—" They are never diverted, by the splendor of any " thing that is great, or by the conceit of any thing that is " good in them, from looking upon themselves as *sinful* " dust and ashes." Their whole dependence is upon that *JUST ONE*, who expired on the cross, and whom the

heavens have received. They seek the sanctifying SPIRIT, in consequence of their SAVIOUR's death; and give all diligence, to *add to their faith virtue.**

Ther. If people may be safe, and their eternal interests secure, without any knowledge of these particularities; why should you offer to puzzle their heads, about a few unnecessary *scholastic* terms?

Asp. *Scriptural* terms, you should have said Theron.—However, we are not very solicitous, as to the credit, or the use, of any particular set of phrases. Only let men be humbled, as *convicted criminals,* at the REDEEMER's feet: let them rely, as *devoted pensioners,* on his precious merits: and they are undoubtedly in the way to a blissful immortality.—Yet, will their way be less clear, their steps more embarrassed, by not distinctly understanding the benign and consolatory doctrine, of *free justification through the righteousness of JESUS CHRIST.* A proper information, as to this important point, would shed light upon their paths, and encourage them in their journey; would further their progress in holiness, and increase their joy in the LORD.

Ther. The followers of your opinion, I have observed, are perpetually dwelling upon this *one favorite* topic; to the exclusion of that grand and truly essential part of christianity, sanctification.

Asp. If you have ever taken notice of such a conduct, you are unquestionably right, in with-holding your approbation. It is a manifest incongruity, and deserves your censure. But, assure yourself, it proceeds from a misapprehension in the persons, and has no connection with the nature of the doctrine.

I am far, very far from reducing the *various* parts of christianity, (which, when connected, make up so well-proportioned a system) to this *single,* however distinguished branch? Sanctification is equally necessary, both to our present peace, and to our final felicity.† Indeed, they are

* 2 Pet.

† Not to obtain our peace and felicity. This is done solely and completely by JESUS CHRIST. But as a necessary and eminent ingredient in both.

as reciprocally necessary, for the purposes of intellectual and eternal happiness; as the *heart* and the *lungs* are, to the subsistence of the animal oeconomy. The former must transmit, the latter must refine, the vital fluid; or else, disease will take place, and death will ensue.—My intention is, that those fundamental truths of the gospel, like these master-organs in the body, may have each its proper office assigned; each concur to support the better health, and to promote the spiritual growth of the christian.

Ther. Other of your zealous folks I have known, who are all for the *sanctifying* influence of the SPIRIT; and reckon this affiance on the SAVIOUR's merits, among the beggarly elements of religion. They scarce ever mention what CHRIST has done *for us;* but insist wholly upon, what he does *in us.*—When the religious people are so divided among themselves, how can a stranger act? Which opinion shall he prefer?

Asp. Let him not prefer, but associate. Discard neither, but choose both.—If the all-gracious REDEEMER has poured out his blood on the cross, that my guilt may be expatiated; and presents his intercession in heaven, that I may be endued with the SPIRIT:—If he will be the *meritorious cause* of my justification, and the *operative principle* of my sanctification:—Why should I scruple to receive him, in either, in both capacities? Who would lop off the right hand, in order to impart the higher dignity, or the greater importance to the left? I would be no partialist in christianity: neither diminish her dowry, nor mutilate her privileges.

Ther. You seem, if not to mutilate, yet to *split* the merits of CHRIST, and parcel out the efficacy of his mediatorial undertaking. Ascribing so much to his active, and so much to his passive righteousness; pardon to *this*, and life to *that.*

Asp. Some, perhaps, may be pleased with this way of stating the matter. But, it is a method, which I neither attempt to defend, nor wish to imitate.—To *distinguish* between the active and passive righteousness, I think, is not amiss. Because, this sets the fulness of our LORD's merit in the clearest light; and gives the completest honor

to GOD's holy law.—But to *divide* them into detached portions, independent on each other, seems to be fanciful, rather than judicious. For, had either part of the mediatorial obedience been wanting; I apprehend, neither pardon, nor acceptance, nor any spiritual blessing, could have been vouchsafed to fallen man.

The two *parts* are inseparable; making, in their connection, a necessary and noble *whole*, for the accomplishment of our salvation. Just as the light and the heat of yonder sun, unite their operation; to produce this delightful day, and this fruitful weather.—However, therefore, I may happen to express myself, I never consider the active or the passive righteousness, in the *exclusive* sense; but would always have them understood, as a grand and glorious aggregate. Looking upon our SAVIOUR's universal obedience, which commenced at his incarnation; was carried on through his life; and terminated in his death;—looking upon all this, in its *collective* form, as the object of my faith, and the foundation of my hopes.*

Ther. I think, you lay too much stress upon this controverted, and perhaps *merely speculative* point.

Asp. Merely speculative! say not thus, my dear friend. —"How I may be justified before GOD, my maker, my governor, and my judge?" Is, of all enquiries, the most *interesting* and *important*. It is the main hinge, on which every instance of practical religion turns. True comfort, willing obedience, holy communion with the Divine MAJESTY, *all* depend upon this capital point.

* In this opinion, Aspasio has Milton's archangel for his precedent. Michael speaking of his LORD and our LORD, says;

The law of GOD exact he shall fulfil,
Both by obedience and by love, though love
Alone fulfil the law; thy punishment
He shall endure, by coming in the flesh
To a reproachful life and cursed death;
Proclaiming life to all who shall believe
In his redemption.——B. XII 402

According to the tenour of these very valuable lines, our LORD's fulfilling the law, and enduring the punishment, are the concurring causes, or the one compound cause, of life and redemption to sinners.

For from being a merely speculative point, it ascribes the most undivided glory to the ever-blessed GOD, and his free grace.—It administers the more serene and *substantial* satisfactions to frail, but believing man.—It cherishes, with the most kindly influence, that pure and undefiled religion, which has its seat in the heart; has its birth from love; and is a real antepast, both of the business and the bliss of saints in light.

In short; justification through the righteousness of JESUS CHRIST, is an article of religion, whose benefits are (to use a charming simile suggested by this rural prospect) numerous *as the bud of the field.**—Can we, then, lay too much stress upon a doctrine, so greatly momentous; upon a privilege, so extensively beneficial?

Ther. When all this is *proved,* then for my reply, Aspasio. Nay, then you shall have more than a reply; I promise you my cordial assent.

Asp. And if all this be incapable of proof, I assure you, Theron, I will not solicit *your* assent. Nay more, I will revoke and renounce *my own.*

Ther. At present, I believe, we must go in, and prepare for our visitants. Some other interview may afford us leisure, to canvass this question more minutely.

Asp. Though I have never much inclination, even when there is the most leisure, for controversy; yet, if you insist upon it, I shall not absolutely refuse to engage in a debate with my Theron. Because, he will come to the amicable rencounter, without bringing *angry passions* for his second. —My reasons will be impartially weighed, not artfully eluded, much less answered with invective.—If some inadvertent expression should drop from my lips, he will not rigorously prosecute the slip; nor aggravate an unguarded sentence into the crime of heresy.—Candour will form his judgment, and good-nature dictate his expressions.

Ther. I Thank you, my dear Aspasio, for your genteel admonition. What *I am,* in the language of complaisance, means, what I *should be.* —Well: I will endeavour to take

* Ezek. xvi. 7

your hint, and check this my impetuosity of spirit. I have admired, O! that I could imitate, the beautiful example of St. *Paul*. When *Festus*, forgetting the dignity of the governor, and the politeness of the gentleman, uttered that indecent reflection; *Paul, thou art beside thyself: much learning doth make thee mad.* Did the great preacher of christianity kindle into resentment?—The charge was unjust and abusive. But the apostle, with a perfect command of himself, returned the softest, yet the most spirited answer imaginable. *I am not mad, most noble* Festus; *but speak the words of truth and soberness.*—Inexpressibly graceful was this calm and obliging reply. Though short, infinitely more convincing than a whole torrent of bitter or recriminating words. It disarmed the Judge of his rising displeasure; it conciliated the favor of his royal assessor; and brought honor to the christian cause.

This amiable self-regimen, and moderation of temper, I shall be sure to see exemplified in my friend's conversation; however I may fail of it myself, or be proof against all his arguments.

Asp. Ah! Theron, we want no monitor, to remind us of our supposed excellencies. And if you begin with your compliments, it is time to put an end to our discourse.

Only let me just observe, that *divine truths* cannot be properly discerned, but by the enlightening influences of the *divine SPIRIT*. We must address ourselves to this enquiry, not only with unprejudiced minds, but likewise with praying hearts, we must bring to this dispute, not barely the quiver of logic, but that *unction from the HOLY ONE, which may teach us all things.**—Let us then adopt the poet's aspiration;

—— Thou celestial light,
Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers
Irradiate; there plant eyes; all mist from thence
Purge and disperse!——Milton, B. III. 51.

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* 1 John ii. 20, 27.



DIALOGUE III.



THERON.

WE are now, Aspasio, about two miles distant from my house. The horse-road lies through a narrow dusty lane. The foot-path leads along a spacious pleasant meadow. Suppose, we deliver our horses to the servant, and walk the remainder of the way?

Asp. You could not make a proposal, more agreeable to my inclination. Especially, as the air is become cool, and the walk is so inviting.

What a magnificent and charming scene?—Hills, on either side, gently rising, and widely spreading. Their summits, crowned with scattered villages, and clustering trees. Their slopes, divided into a beauteous chequer-work; consisting partly of tillage, with its waving crops; partly of pasturage, with its grazing herds.—Before us, the trefoil, the clover, and a variety of grassy plants, differently branched, weave themselves into a *Carpet* of living green. Can any of the manufacturers formed in the looms, or extended in the palaces of *Persia*, vie with the covering of this ample area? vie with it, in grandeur of size, or delicacy of decoration?

What a profusion of the gayest flowers, fringing the banks and embroidering the plain!—Nothing can be brighter than the lustre of those silver *daisies;* nothing deeper, than the tinge of those golden *crowfoots*. Yet, both seem to acquire additional liveliness, by succeeding

to the deformity of winter, and by flourishing amidst the freshest verdure.

Ther. Nature is truly in *her prime.*—The vegetable tribes are putting on their richest attire. Those chesnuts, on our right-hand, begin to rear their flowering pyramids; those willows, on our left, are tipt with tassels of grey; while yonder poplars, which overlook the river, and seem to command the meadows, are pointed with rolls of silver. The hawthorn, in every *hedge*, is partly turgid with silken gems, partly diffused into a milk-white bloom. Not a straggling furze, nor a solitary thicket on the *heath*, but wears a rural nosegay. Even amidst that neglected *dike*, the arum rises in humble state; most curiously shrouded in her leafy tabernacle, and surrounded with luxuriant families, each distinguished by a peculiar livery of green. Look wherever we will, all is a delightful display of present fertility, and a joyous pledge of future plenty.—Now we experience what the royal poet, in very delicate imagery, describes: *The winter is past; the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come; and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land. The fig-tree putteth forth her green figs; and the vine with the tender grapes give a good smell.**

Asp. Your quotation and the scene remind me of a remark, which should have taken place in our last night's discourse. When we were enumerating the excellencies of the sacred writings, methings, we might have added;—are you fond of *pastoral,* in all its flowery graces, and blooming honors? Never have ye seen such exquisite touches of rural painting, or such sweet images of endeared affection, as in the *song of songs which is Solomon's.* All the brilliant and amiable appearances in nature are employed, to delineate the tenderness of *his* heart, who is love itself—to pourtray the beauty of *his* person, who is *the chiefest among ten thousand*—and describe the happiness of *those* souls, whose *fellowship is with the* FATHER, *and with his Son* JESUS CHRIST.†

* Cant. ii. 11, 12, 13. † 1 John i. 3.

See! Theron, what the chearing warmth, and the genial showers, of spring have done! The rough tree softens into verdure. The ragged thorn is robed with beauty. Even the uncultivated lanes teem with herbage. *Such* a change, so pleasing and so ennobling, the gospel of CHRIST introduces into the soul.—Not a day, scarce an hour passes, but this season of universal fecundity produces something *new;* something that improves the aspect, and increases the riches of nature. And is there any state or any circumstance of life, in which the faith of CHRIST does not exert a similar efficacy? does not purify the heart, and bring forth fruit unto GOD?

This is supposed to be the spiritual meaning of that fine descriptive picture, which you have borrowed from the *Canticles.* It displays the *benign agency* of grace and its doctrines; especially, of our LORD's satisfaction for sin, and of his righteousness imputed to sinners. The blessings operate, with much the same favourable and happy energy, both on our morals and our comforts; as the *sweet influences* of the vernal sun operate, on the sprouting herbs, and opening flowers.

Ther. If such were the effects of your doctrine, it would stand the fairer chance for general acceptation.—But there are several weighty scruples to be removed before persons of a liberal and enlarged way of thinking, can acquiesce in your opinion. Who, for instance, can persuade himself, that what you call *the sanctification of* CHRIST, is consistent with the dictates of reason, or with the perfections of the DEITY?

Asp. Let Gentlemen be candid in their enquiries, and *truly* liberal in their way of thinking; then, I flatter myself, these scruples may be removed, without much difficulty.

GOD, the Almighty Creator, and supreme governor of the world, having made man, gave him a law; with a *penalty* annexed, in case of disobedience.—This sacred law our fore-father *Adam* presumptuously broke; and we, his posterity, were *involved* in his guilt. Or, should that point be controverted, we have undeniably made, by many personal transgressions, his apostacy *our own.*—Insomuch, that

all have sinned; have forfeited their happiness, and are become obnoxious to punishment.

Man being thus ruined, none could recover him, except his injured MAKER. But shall he be recovered, shall he be restored, without suffering the punishment due to his crime, and threatened by his CREATOR?—What then will become of the *justice* of the divine LAWGIVER? And how shall the *honor* of his holy law be maintained? At this rate, who would reverence its authority, or fear to violate its precepts?—Sinners might be emboldened to multiply their transgressions; and tempted to think, that the GOD of immaculate holiness, the GOD of unchangeable veracity, is *altogether such an one as themselves.**

Does it not appear needful, that *some* expedient be devised, in order to prevent these dishonorable and horrid consequences?

Ther. Proceed to inform us, what the expedient is.

Asp. To ascertain the dignity of the supreme administration, yet rescue mankind from utter destruction, this admirable purpose was formed, and in the fulness of time executed. The second person of the ever-blessed TRINITY unites the human nature to the divine; *submits* himself to the obligations of his people; and becomes *responsible* for all their guilt. In this capacity, he performs a perfect obedience, and undergoes the sentence of death: makes a full expiation of their sins, and establishes their title to life.—By which means the law is satisfied; justice is magnified; and the richest grace exercised. Man enjoys a great salvation, not to the discredit of *any*, but to the unspeakable glory of *all*, the divine attributes.

This is what we mean by CHRIST's satisfaction. And this, I should imagine, wants no recommendation to our *unprejudiced reason;* as, I am sure, it is most delightfully accommodated to our *distressed condition.*—It is also con-

* This was actually the case, as we are informed by the SEARCHER of hearts, when, on a particular occasion, punishment was only retarded. How much more would such impious opinions have prevailed, if on this grand act of disobedience, punishment had been entirely forborne? Psal. l. 21.

firmed by many express passages of scripture, and illustrated by a variety of very significant images.

Ther. Pray let me be favored with some of your scriptural images.—After which, we may enquire, whether your doctrine will stand the test of reason.

Asp. What is your notion of a *ransom?*

Ther. To ransom is to redeem any one from captivity or misery, by purchase, by exchange, or some other valuable consideration.

Asp. When *Priam* ransomed the dead body of *Hector* from the victorious *Achilles*, how was it done?

Ther. By paying a *price.*—Thus *Fabius* recovered the captives, which were taken by *Hannibal.* He transmitted the sum required, and they were discharged from their confinement.

Asp. Such is the redemption procured for sinners by our LORD JESUS CHRIST. Of such a nature, (though incomparably more grand and august in all its circumstances) and expressed by the very same word. "The Son of Man came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister; and to give his life a ransom for many.

CHRIST also paid a price—a real price—a most satisfactory price. In consideration of which, our freedom from death, from hell, from every penal evil is granted.— *Ye are redeemed*, says the apostle, *not with corruptible things, silver and gold, but with the precious blood of* CHRIST.—Let me add one text more; which, in the same style of commutative justice, aserts the same truth. CHRIST has redeemed us, not by way of entreaty, but by paying a redemption price. He hath bought, not begged us off, from the curse of the law.—Yes, my friend,

The ransom was paid down. The fund of heav'n,
Heaven's inexhaustible exhausted fund,
Amazing and amaz'd, pour'd forth the price,
All price beyond. Though curious to compute,
Archangels fail'd to cast the mighty sum.*

Night Thoughts, No. IV.

Ther. Hold a little, good Aspasio. Consider the consequence of what you maintain. If there was a ransom in the case, to whom was it paid?—The devil had led sinners captive. They are said to be the slaves of satan. And shall the blessed JESUS pay his life to that accursed fiend? Shocking to imagine!—Yet, shocking as it is, it must follow from your own, and your poet's assertion.

Asp. You misapprehend the case, Theron. The ransom was paid to GOD. Thou hast redeemed us to GOD, is the confession of the saints in light.—He is the great lawgiver, against whom our sins are committed.* He is the great householder, to whom the debt is due. Satisfaction, therefore, was made to the divine law, and to the divine justice. The one of which was offended; the other violated; and both concurred to denounce the transgressor's doom.—Of which doom satan was only the destined executioner. Whose malignity, and implacable rage, GOD is pleased to make the instrument of inflicting his vengeance. As he formerly used the idolatrous kings of Assyria and Babylon, to chastise the disobedient Israelites.

When we were without strength, utterly ruined, yet absolutely helpless—when none, in heaven or earth, could afford us any succour—then our LORD JESUS CHRIST most graciously and most seasonably interposed. He said, as it is very emphatically represented by *Elihu; deliver them from going down into the pit; I have found a ransom.* He did, what is very beautifully described by our English Classic;

> -So man, as is most just,
> Shall satisfy for man, be judg'd and die;
> And dying rise, and rising with him raise
> His brethren, ransom'd with his own dear life.‡

Ther. But pray, do not you allow, that CHRIST is truly and properly GOD?

* Psal. li. 5. ‡ MILTON.

Asp. We not only allow it, but we insist upon it, and make our boast of it. This is the very foundation of *his* merit, and the support of *our* hope.

Ther. This may aggrandize the merit of CHRIST, but it will increase the difficulty of your task. For, according to this opinion, CHRIST must make satisfaction *to himself*. And is not this a practice quite unprecedented? A notion perfectly absurd?

Asp. It is quite unprecedented, you say.—On this point, I shall not vehemently contend. Only let me mention one instance. *Zaleucus*, you know, the prince of the *Locrians*, made a decree, that whoever was convicted of adultery, should be punished with the loss of both his eyes. Soon after this establishment, the legislator's *own son* was apprehended in the very fact, and brought to a public trial.—How could the Father proceed, in so tender and delicate a conjuncture?—Should he execute the law, in all its rigour? This would be worse than death to the unhappy youth.—Should he pardon so notorious a delinquent? This would defeat the design of his salutary institution.—To avoid both these inconveniencies, he ordered one of his own eyes to be pulled out, and one of his son's. By which means, the rights of justice were preserved inviolate; yet the tenderness of a parent was remarkably indulged. And may we not venture to say? that, in this case, *Zaleucus* both received and made the satisfaction.—*Received* it, as a magistrate; even while he *made* it, as a father.

Ther. I cannot see, how this suffering of the Father was, in any degree, *satisfactory* to the law: since the Father and the Son could not be considered, as *one* and the *same* person. It may pass for an extraordinary instance of parental indulgence. It may strike the benevolent and compassionate hearer. But, if tried at the bar of equity and reason, it will hardly be admitted as any legal satisfaction. It will probably be condemned as a breach of nature's first and fundamental law, self-preservation.

Asp. Your objection, I must confess, has weight. It will oblige me to give up my illustration.—Nevertheless, what my friend urges against the propriety of the comparison, tends to establish the certainty of the doctrine. For,

CHRIST and his people are actually considered, as one and the same person. They are *one* mystical *body:* he the head, they the members: so intimately united to him, that they are *bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh.**—By virtue of which union, their sins were punished in him; and *by his stripes they are healed,*† they obtain impunity and life.

Though there may be nothing, in the procedure of men, which bears any resemblance to this miracle of heavenly goodness; it receives a sufficient confirmation from the language of scripture. He, who wrote as an amanuensis to the unerring SPIRIT, has declared; that GOD was in CHRIST, reconciling the world—unto whom? Unto some third party? no; but reconciling it, by the death and obedience of CHRIST—unto himself. And I can very readily grant tha this divine exertion of benignity and wisdom, should be without a precedent, and without a parallel.

Difficulties, I own, may attend the explication of this article, or be interwoven with its consequences. But since our apprehensions of heavenly things, especially of the adorable TRINI Y, are so obscure and inadequate, we may very easily mistake; and fancy that to be absurd, which is only great, wonderful, and incomprehensible.—Nor let me be thought presumptuous, if I venture to add; that it will be impossible, for all the sagacity in the world to prove this doctrine an absurdity, though it should ever remain an inexplicable mystery.—How many phænomena in the works of external nature, are confessedly mysterious and inexplicable! As to the reality of their existence, they challenge, they command our assent; as to the manner of their existence, they baffle all our researches, and defy our utmost penetration. If, therefore, the point under debate, be fully and incontestably revealed in the Bible, we must renounce the philosopher, before we can consistently act the sceptic.

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Eph. v. 30. † Isai. liii.

Ther. Let us see then, whether it be so fully and incontestably revealed in the bible.—You have given me, as yet, but one of your scriptural images.

Asp. I have another at your service.—CHRIST is called an high-priest. What do you take to be the nature of the priestly-office?

Ther. The business of the priest was, I apprehend, to offer sacrifices, and to make intercession for the people.

Asp. Very true; and CHRIST could not with any propriety, receive this appellation, if he had been defective in performing *either* of the sacerdotal functions.—Now, that he offered no such victim as slain beasts, is universally acknowledged. We might presume therefore, even though we had not the authority of an apostle to assure us, that he offered HIMSELF, through the eternal SPIRIT, to GOD.*

The cross, shall I say? rather his divine nature was the *altar*. His soul and body, each immaculately pure, were the *Holocaust*. These he resigned; the one, to deadly wounds; the other, to inexpressible anguish; and both, to be instead of all whole burnt-offerings.—On this invaluable oblation, his intercession at the right-hand of his FATHER is founded: from this it derives that prevailing efficacy, which is the security of his standing, and the recovery of his fallen disciples.

Give me leave to ask farther; what is your idea of a *sacrifice?* When *Iphigenia* was slain at the altar, what was the import of that memorable action?

Ther. It was intended, if we may credit Virgil's account, to appease the indignation of some elementary Deity; and thereby obtain a propitious gale, for the wind-bound fleet, and confederate forces of Greece. But, I hope, you would not make that solemn butchery of the royal virgin, a pattern for the supreme Goodness; nor the practice of gross idolaters, a model for the religion of the holy JESUS.

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* Heb. ix. 14.

Asp. By no means, Theron. Only I would observe— that the custom of offering sacrifices obtained, among the most cultivated nations of the heathen world—That these sacrifices were frequently of the *vicarious* kind; in which the victim was substituted, instead of the offerer; and the former being cut off, the latter was discharged from punishment—Consequently, that the classic authors would (in case there was any need of such auxiliaries) join with the sacred writers, to declare the expediency, and explain the nature of sacrifices.—This also you will permit me to add; that, if the Heathens talk sensibly on any part of religious worship, it is on the subject of sacrifices. Their sentiments concerning expiatory oblations, seem to be the faint and distant echo of revelation. I have usually considered them, not as the institutions of mere reason, but as the remains of some broken tradition.

However, the truest and most authentic signification of a sacrifice, is to be learned from the *Jewish* ritual, explained by the gospel comment. Do you remember the *Mosaic* account of that ordinance?

Ther. You are much better acquainted, Aspasio, with those sacred antiquities; and can give the most satisfactory information, with regard to this particular. Only let me remind you, that *alms* are styled offerings; and *praises*, both in the prophetical and evangelical writings, come under the denomination of sacrifices.

Asp. Though praises and alms are styled sacrifices, they are not of the *propitiary*, but *eucharistic* kind. They are never said to expiate transgressions, only are represented as acceptable to GOD through JESUS CHRIST; that divinely precious victim, whose merits both cancel our guilt, and commend our services! According to—

Ther. Stay a moment, Aspasio.—Let me recollect myself.—This may be the meaning of sacrifices, as ordained by *Moses*, and solemnized among the *Jews*.—"Sacrifices "were a symbolical address to GOD; intended to express "before him the devotion, affections, dispositions, and desires of the heart, by significative and emblematical actions."

Asp. This is the first time, I ever heard of a *symbolical address* to GOD. Sacrifices were, if you please, a *real* address to GOD, attended with significant ceremonies, or expressive symbols.

"They expressed, you say, the devotion, affections, dis-" positions, and desires of the heart." I rather think, they expressed the guilt and the faith of the offerer.—*His guilt;* this seems to be intimated, by the very names of the propitiatory sacrifices. The sin and the sacrifice, the offending action and the expiatory rite, being signified by one and the same word. It is somewhat more than intimated, by the occasion of the offering, and the state of the offerer. Since it was only on account of guilt contracted, that piacular oblations were made; and only from a guilty person, that they were required.—*His faith;* or firm belief, that ceremonial guilt, which shut him out from the communion of the visible church, and subjected him to the infliction of temporal judgments, was removed by *these;* but that moral guilt, which defiles the soul, and excludes from heaven, should be purged by *some better sacrifice than these.*—In the exercise of this faith, *Abel* offered up a more acceptable sacrifice than *Cain;* and without this faith, exercised in some degree, it was impossible to please GOD.

Ther. If you dislike this account of sacrifices, take another. Which, as well as the preceding, I have learned from an eminent pen. "The priest made atonement for " sin, by sacrificing a beast, *only* as that was a sign and " testimony of the sacrificer's pure and upright heart."

Asp. So then you would ascribe *all* the efficacy of sacrifices, to the purity and uprightness of the sacrificer. Whereas, I think, they had no share at all in the matter. The types were effectual, *only* by virtue of their connection with the great sacrifice—ordained, in the eternal counsels of JEHOVAH—prepared, when the SON of the most HIGH was made flesh—offered, when the blessed JESUS surrendered himself, to be led as a lamb to the slaughter.—They were so far from being independent on this divine oblation, that they acted in perpetual subserviency to it, and derived all their value from it. They were the sha-

dow, but the body was CHRIST. And does not the former owe all its existence to the latter?

If sacrifices were intended to bespeak integrity of heart, methinks, the state of *innocency* had been the properest period, for their institution and oblation. But this awful ceremony had no existence, till man was fallen, and sin committed,—If intended to denote purity of heart, why should sacrifices be particularly injoined on that solemn day, when confession was made of *all the sins*,* of the whole congregation? An oddly concerted device this; in which the tongue must contradict, what the ceremony would recognize.

How could it be proper, after the *violation* of some law, or the *neglect* of some ordinance, immediately to go and offer a sacrifice? What would be the language of such a practice, as interpreted by your eminent pen? "I have "done wickedly, but my heart is pure and upright." Is this consistent with the spirit of humility, of modesty, or of common ingenuity? Is this the way of giving glory to GOD, or of taking shame to ourselves?—Whereas, let the sacrifice be a typical expiation, and this is the significancy of the action. "LORD, I confess myself guilty. Pu-"nishment and death are *my due*. Let them fall, I be-"seech thee, on *my victim*. That thy justice being glo-"rified, and thy law satisfied, thy mercy may be honor-"ably displayed in my forgiveness."

Besides, Theron; what *likeness*, what *agreement* is there, between the profession of integrity, and an animal mortally wounded; wallowing in its own blood; and struggling in the agonies of death?—Whereas, between these dying pangs, and the punishment due to sin, or the sorrows sustained by the crucified SAVIOUR, there is an apparent, a striking, and in various respects, an edifying resemblance.

Ther. They declared, perhaps, the sacrificer's readiness and resolution, to slay the brute in himself, and to lay down his life in adherence to GOD.

* Lev. xvi. 21.

Asp. I don't remember, to have seen this asserted in the bible; neither have I met with any hint, to countenance such an interpretation. It seems, in some cases, to be incompatible with the very nature of things, and contrary to the express declarations of scripture.—*Doves*, you know, *lambs*, and *sheep*, were offered in sacrifice. But shall we slay the lamb, the dove, the sheep in ourselves? So far from it, that CHRIST's disciples are either described by these creatures, or commanded to imitate their properties. *Be ye harmless as doves.** *Peter, feed my lambs.*† *My sheep, hear my voice.*‡

Supposing, however, that, on some occasions, this might be a subordinate design, or a valuable improvement of the sacrificial acts: yet their primary intention, and ultimate end, were widely different. Were much more significant of the divine compassions, and much better adapted to the comfort of mankind. They were—an *awful indication*, that death was the wages of sin: at the same time, a *chearing declaration*, that GOD was pleased to accept the death of the animal, instead of the sinner's: a *a figurative representation*§ also of that illustrious PERSON, who was *to bear the sin of many, and pour out his soul for transgressors.*

Ther. Since sacrifices were of a religious nature, they should not only be instructive and beneficial in their tendency, but have their *due effects*, with regard to GOD, to sin, and to the person who brought them.

Asp. They had, in all these instances, their due effects —with regard to GOD; that his justice might be magnified, and his anger appeased—*to sin;* that its demerit

* Matt. x. 16. † John xxi. 15. ‡ John x. 27.

§ What says Milton, upon the subject of sacrifices, and with reference to their principal design? He calls them, and very properly,

——————————Religious rites
Of sacrifice; informing men by types
And shadows, of that destin'd seed to bruise
The serpent, by what means he shall achieve
Mankind's deliverance.———B. XII. 231.

might be displayed, yet its guilt be done away—*to the person who brought them;* that he might receive remission of sins, together with peace and joy in believing.

Ther. There are so many sorts of sacrifices, appointed in the *Jewish* rubric, that I am at a loss for a *distinct* idea; unless some one be singled out, and separately considered.

Asp. Among all the sacrifices instituted by *Moses*, none more circumstantially typefied the blessed JESUS; none more appositely expressed the benefits of his oblation; than the *lamb* slain at the feast of the *passover*, and the *sin-offering* on the day of atonement.

An expositor, who cannot be mistaken, has given us this interpretation of the paschal lamb; "CHRIST our passover is sacrificed for us.* Declaring hereby—That CHRIST is a real sacrifice—That he was prefigured, in this capacity, by the paschal lamb—That the circumstances, which distinguished it, met in him; and the advantages, which resulted from it, were procured by him: *those*, in their truest import; *these*, in their largest extent.—The words of the apostle speak this sense, to the plainest simplest reader. Whereas, to extort any other signification from them, what subtilty of wit, and what refinement, or rather violence of criticism, must be used!

The paschal lamb was *without blemish*. Such was the LAMB of GOD: free from all taint of original sin, and from every spot of actual transgression.—A lamb of *the first year*, in all the sprightliness and floridity of youth.—CHRIST also laid down his life, not when worn with age, or debilitated with sickness; but in the very prime of his days; amidst all the bloom of health, and all the vigour of manhood. That his sacrifice might have every recommending circumstance, which could render it acceptable to GOD, and available for man.

The lamb was to be slain in such a manner, as might occasion the most *copious effusion* of its blood. And was not this very exactly fulfilled in our suffering SAVIOUR? His blood flowed out, in vast abundance, by the amazing

* 1 Cor. v. 7.

sweat in the garden; by the rending lashes of the scourge: by the lacerating points of the thorns; by the dreadful nails, which cleft his hands and his feet; by the deadly spear, which ripped open his side, and cut its way to his heart.—Though the blood was to be so liberally spilt, *a bone of the Lamb was not to be broken.* And you cannot but recollect, you cannot but admire, the wonderful interposition of Providence, to accomplish this emblematical prediction. When the soldiers had received a command, to break the legs of the three crucified persons; when they had actually broke the legs of each malefactor, which hung on the right side of our LORD, and on the left; their minds were over-ruled (by a divine influence, no doubt) to spare the blessed JESUS, and to leave all his bones *unhurt, untouched.*

The Lamb was to be killed *before the whole assembly;* in the presence, either of the whole congregation of *Israel,* or else of that particular society, which concurred in eating the flesh. And did not the whole multitude of the *Jews* conspire against our REDEEMER, to put him to death? Did they not all cry out, as with one voice? *Crucify Him! Crucify Him!* Was he not executed, at one of their grand festivals, and in the sight of the whole assembled nation? —The blood was not to be poured heedlessly upon the ground, but received carefully into a bason; and *sprinkled,* with the utmost punctuality. Sprinkled, not upon the threshold, but upon the *lintel and door-posts.* In like manner, the blood of the heavenly LAMB, is not to be trampled under foot, by a contemptuous disregard. It is the treasure of the church, and the medicine of life. To be received therefore by an adoring faith, and most thankfully applied to our consciences, our conversation, our whole man.—The sprinkling of that blood *secured* every *Israelitish* family, from the destroying angel's sword. So, the merits of the slaughtered SAVIOUR* screen every believing sinner from the stroke of offended justice, and from the pains of eternal death. What must have become

* Both St. Peter and St. Paul speak of the blood of sprinkling. 1 Pet. i. 2. Heb. xii. 24.

of the *Israelite*, who, trusting to the uprightness of his heart, should neglect to make use of this divinely appointed safeguard? He must inevitably have been punished with the death of his first-born. Equally certain, but infinitely more dreadful, will be *his* condemnation; who, before the Omniscient JUDGE, shall presume to plead his own integrity, or confide in his own repentance, and reject the atonement of the dying JESUS.

Ther. Now, if you please, for the *sin-offering*; which seems to have been the most eminent sacrifice of them all.

Asp. It was the most *comprehensive*; because, it shadowed forth, not only the death of CHRIST, but his resurrection from the dead, and his ascension into heaven.—As the various actions of some illustrious personage, which cannot be exhibited by the painter in a single draught, are displayed in *several compartments*; yet all constitute one and the same grand historical picture. So, these glorious events, incapable of being represented by any *single* animal, were typefied by *two kids of the goats*: which nevertheless were reputed, but as *one* offering.

These goats were brought to the door of the tabernacle, and there presented before the LORD. CHRIST also presented himself before GOD, when he went up to Jerusalem, that all things written by the prophets concerning him might be accomplished.*—The goat, on which the LORD's lot fell, was devoted to death. CHRIST also, being delivered by the determinate counsel and fore-knowledge of GOD,† was crucified and slain—The body was burnt without the camp. Which pointed at the very place, and pictured out the very nature, of our LORD's sufferings. For he suffered without the gate:‡ was there exposed to the rage of men, and the wrath of GOD; under the most exquisite pains of body, and the most insupportable agonies of soul. All significantly typefied, by the flame of a devouring fire. Than which nothing is more fierce, nothing more penetrating, or more severely tormenting.

* Luke xviii. 31. † Acts ii. 23. ‡ Heb. xiii. 12.

As the animal which was slaughtered, shewed forth the REDEEMER dying for our sins; that which escaped, prefigured the same SAVIOUR, rising again for our justification.—The high-priest put his hands upon the head of the scape-goat, and with great solemnity, confessed the sins of the whole congregation. The import of this ceremony is expresly declared in the sacred Canon; "the goat "shall bear upon him their iniquity."* It is most comfortably explained by the prophet, "the LORD laid on "HIM the iniquity of us all;"† and most delightfully confirmed by the apostle, "he himself bore our sins in his own body on the tree.‡

Confession being made, the goat was dismissed into a land not inhabited: a place separated from all resort of men: where he was never likely to be found any more. To teach us, that our offences, having been expiated by the bleeding JESUS, are entirely done away; shall never rise up in judgment against us; but, according to the prophecy of Jeremiah, *When the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, they shall not be found.*‖—It is farther enjoined, that *Aaron shall confess all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, in all their sins. Iniquities, transgressions, sins,* are particularized; and, to this cluster of expressions, the word *all* is added. To inform us, that the *least* sins need the atonement of CHRIST's death; to assure us, that the greatest sins are not beyond the compass of its efficacy; and that *all* sins, be they ever so heinous, or ever so numerous, are forgiven to the true believer.

The high priest carried the blood of the victim into the second tabernacle, even *within the veil.* So CHRIST *entered with his own blood,* not into the holy places made with hands, but *into heaven itself.*§—The blood was sprinkled upon the mercy-seat, before the mercy-seat; and left in the holy of holies, that it might always remain before the

* It is observable, that whereas the scape-goat is said to bear the sins of Israel, Lev. xvi 22 the very same phrase is applied to CHRIST, Isai. liii. 12.

† Isai. liii. 6. ‡ 1 Pet. ii 24. ‖ Jer. l. 20. § Heb. ix 24.

LORD. And does not CHRIST *always appear* in the presence of GOD for us? Does he not *ever live* to make intercession for us? To plead his all-sufficient propitiation in our behalf? That the benefits procured thereby, may be communicated, may be ratified, and perpetuated to his people?

Ther. The scripture ascribes these benefits, to repentance and reformation of life, qualifications of *our own*; not to any such cause, as a vicarious sacrifice; where the merit must necessarily subsist *in another*. What says the apostle *Peter*, when he had just received his instructions from the HOLY GHOST? *Repent and be converted*, not look unto an atonement, or depend upon a propitiation, *that your sins may be blotted out.**

Asp. 'Tis true, the benefits of the new covenant are promised to penitents, as their happy portion; but never assigned to their repentance, as the *procuring cause.* Never to their repentance, but to the blood of the great HIGH-PRIEST, called therefore *the blood of the everlasting covenant*;† being the condition stipulated in it, required by it, and in consequence of which, all its unspeakable privileges are bestowed.

Besides; the qualifications you suppose, are the gift of the LORD. We are not able to exercise, till CHRIST, who is exalted for this very purpose, *gives* repentance.‡—A conversion to GOD, and a newness of life, are not the effect of human abilities, but the work of the divine SPIRIT, and the fruit of the REDEEMER's death.—Exclusive of this death, there had been no such thing, as a repenting sinner, or a renewed soul.—The merit of this death opens the heaven of heavens, and all its inexhaustible stores. By this death, by this alone, we have the enjoyment of grace, and the hope of glory.

Ther. You begin to be in raptures, Aspasio!

Asp. Excuse me, Theron. It is not easy to repress the sallies of delight and devotion, when we muse upon such wonders of loving-kindness; when we are touched with a

* Acts iii. 19. † Heb. xiii. 20. ‡ Acts v. 31.

of such immensely rich benefits.—A great HIGH-PRIEST! who is *higher than the heavens;** yet humbled himself to death, even the death of the cross!—Who is *consecrated for evermore;*† and pleads all his merit, improves all his influence, for our consummate felicity!

> What heart of stone but glows at thoughts like these?
> Such contemplations mount us, and should mount
> The mind still higher; nor ever glance in man
> Unraptur'd, uninflam'd.‡

But I check myself; and will either reply to your objections, or listen to your sentiments. Listen as attentively, as you yourself attend to the music of that *shrill-tongued Thrush.*

Ther. Its sweetly-modulated lays, eminent even in the symphony of spring, having indeed attracted my ears. But my mind is disengaged, and free for your conversation.

Asp. I can repeat a song, sweeter far than this, or all the melody of the woodland choirs. A song, which has harmony enough, to make the brow of melancholy wear a smile, or to sooth away the sorrows of death itself. *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of GOD's elect? It is GOD that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is CHRIST that died; yea rather, that is risen again; who is even at the right-hand of GOD; who also maketh intercession for us.*‖—According to my friend's principles, the strain of this triumphant exclamation was ill-judged, and should have run in the following manner:—"Who shall "lay any thing to our charge? We have endeavoured to "preserve a rectitude of disposition, and to persist in a "laudable course of action. Wherever we failed, we "have been sorry for the fault, and have implored pardon "from the divine MAJESTY. What then shall dismay "us?"—*Your* topics of consolation would be complete,

* Heb. vii. 26. † Heb. vii. 28. ‡ Night Thoughts, No IV.

‖ Rom. viii 33, 34.

without having recourse to the death of CHRIST, as an atonement for sin; or to the resurrection of CHRIST, as an evidence that the atonement is accepted; or to the intercession of CHRIST, as the cause of our interest in that transcendent blessing.

Ther. Since you so frequently mention, and so earnestly insist upon *atonement*, I should be glad to know the precise signification of the word. I am told, the original phrase has nothing to do with the idea of making satisfaction.

Asp. We may learn the precise signification of atonement, by considering the means; the effect; and the manner, whereby the means accomplish the effect.—The *effect* of atonement, is pardon—The *means* of obtaining it, are the sacrifice and death of CHRIST—The way or *manner*, whereby the death of CHRIST becomes efficacious for this blessed purpose, is the sovereign appointment of his FATHER; the infinite dignity of his person; and especially the *vicarious* nature of his sufferings, or their being undergone in the stead of sinners.

Ther. It has been supposed, and is affirmed too, that our SAVIOUR's obedience and death, were conducive to our redemption, *only* in virtue of his FATHER's will and appointment.

Asp. I am glad it is some other, and not my Theron, who espouses this opinion. Which is highly injurious to the *dignity* of our REDEEMER's person, and to the *merit* of his obedience.—Neither is it very honorable to the wisdom of the FATHER; unless we suppose him *therefore* to have appointed the death of CHRIST, because he knew it would be a *plenary* satisfaction; fully sufficient for the glorious purpose.

And why should we use that weak inadequate expression, *conducive* to our redemption? would any one say, of the "holy and beautiful house" which *Solomon* built, that it was conducive to the accomplishment of what *Moses* foretold?*—*David's* provision of stones, of timber, and of gold,† was, if you please, conducive to it. But *Solomon's*

* Exod. xv. 17. † 1 Chron. xxix. 2.

act was *perfective* of it; was the very execution of the thing itself. Such are the obedience and death of CHRIST, with respect to our redemption.

Ther. But we forget the original word, and neglect to enquire into its true meaning.

Asp. The word, which we translate *atonement*, implies, in its primary acceptation, the notion of *covering*. Thus the ark was covered, *was overlaid with pitch, within and without:* that all its chinks might be secured, against the insinuating force of the water; and all its timber defended, from the injuries of the liquid element.—When an object, in this or any other manner, is covered over for safety; the covering *receives* every shock, and *sustains* all damages, which would otherwise fall upon the thing covered. The image, therefore, is very pertinently used, to express the true evangelical nature of atonement; and the word is used, with equal propriety, to describe the *mercy-seat*. Which was a costly covering for the ark, made of pure gold, and exactly commensurate to that sacred repository. In this were lodged the tables of the law; whose precepts we have violated, and to whose curse we were subject. Consequently the mercy-seat, both by its situation, its extent, and its office, prefigured the REDEEMER. Who, all pure and spotless, intervenes between the law and the offender; fulfils the commands, and sustains the curse of the former; merits pardon, and procures salvation for the latter.

Observe some delicate flower. Having entertained our eye with one beautiful colour, it suddenly breaks, or gradually softens into another, and gives a renewed pleasure. Such, methinks, is the import of this delightful word.—Besides the preceding signification, it is expressive of *hoar-frost*. Which, in a serene, but sharp wintry morning, covers the houses; covers the trees; covers the whole face of the earth. So, the blood of JESUS, according to the psalmist's representation, covers * all our guilt, and hides every offence. Insomuch that, when this blood is applied

* Psal. xxxii. 1.

by the divine SPIRIT, the LORD *sees no iniquity in Jacob.** He acts, as if he saw none; neither punishes the sinner, though his conduct has been ever so criminal; nor abhors the sinner, though his person has been ever so polluted.

The same expression is used with reference to a *covenant*, and signifies the *abolition* of the contract. Which was done by cancelling the deed; expunging the articles of stipulation, or reducing them to one entire blot. By the covenant of works, all mankind became obnoxious to condemnation; were bound over to death. By the grace of CHRIST, our obligation to punishment is disannulled, and the *hand-writing* of condemnation *is blotted out.*—Should you ask, *how* this is effected? By paying a ransom, and offering a sacrifice.—Should you farther enquire, of *what* this ransom and this sacrifice consisted? Of nothing less than the precious blood,† the inestimable life,‡ the divinely magnificent person of CHRIST.‡

Ther. These then are the capital ideas included in the original word, a covering by way of *defence;* a covering by way of *concealment;* and a blotting, in order to *cancel.*

Asp. They are, Theron.—As the brain (the source of sensation) sends out various detachments of nerves, to animate and actuate all the parts of the vital system: so, this capital idea, the idea of *atonement*, branches itself into a variety of subordinate, yet similar significations. Which run through the whole oeconomy of the gospel, to enliven and quicken the spirit of a believer. Let me instance a few particulars. This richly significant word denotes—The exercise of divine mercy‖—The pardon of sin§—A cleansing from guilt¶—Purging from transgression**—Reconciliation for iniquity††—The pacifying of wrath,‖‖—

* Not by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood. Heb ix. 12.

† The Son of Man came to give his life a ransom for many. Mark x. 45.

‡ Who through the eternal SPIRIT offered himself without spot to GOD. Heb. ix. 14.

‖ Deut. xxxii. 43. § Deut. xxi. 8. 2 Chron. xxx. 18.

¶ Numb. xxxv. 33. ** Psal lxv. 3. †† Dan. ix. 24. ‖‖ Ezek. xvi. 63.

Do not these passages (each expressed by some branch of the verb, which conveys to us the idea of *atoning)* plainly intimate—That the atonement of CHRIST is the meritorious cause of all these desirable effects; is the foundation of *every* act of divine goodness; and of *every* blessing vouchsafed to sinners?

Ther. After all, *this* is the consideration, which principally offends and perplexes me—GOD is a Spirit; an absolutely perfect and infinitely pure Being; remote, inconceivably remote, from whatever is gross or corporeal. How then can he take pleasure, in the effusion of blood, or the burning of flesh? How can any such *low carnal* inducements, make him merciful to sinners; or appease, what you call, his wrath?

Asp. Rather what the *scriptures* call his wrath.—You mistake our doctrine, my dear Theron. We never maintain, that any sacrifice whatever, not even the propitiation of CHRIST's death, was intended to *make* GOD merciful. Only to *make way* for his eternal purposes of mercy, without any prejudice either to the demands of his law, or the rights of his justice.—Our sentiments on this head, are exactly consonant to his own declaration, and to his own procedure, in the case of *Job's* calumniating friends.* Though displeased with their conduct, he was merciful to their persons. Nevertheless, he would not exercise that mercy, till they had first offered a sacrifice, and acted faith in a dying SAVIOUR.

Neither is it ever supposed; that the infinitely wise and pure GOD, can take pleasure in the effusion of blood, or the burning of flesh, *simply* considered. This is disclaimed by the HOLY GHOST; *burnt-offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein.* The LORD had no regard to them; took no complacency in them; only as they bore a reference to that noble and inestimable sacrifice, which brings the highest honor to his name; which those slaughtered animals exhibited in a

* See Job xlii. 7, 8. † He

figure; and to which every true *Israelite* had a believing regard.

I say, had *a believing regard.* For, it is affirmed by the author to the *Hebrews*, that the gospel was preached to the *Israelites* in the wilderness.*—What does he mean by the gospel? The very essence of this benevolent scheme, according to the apostle's own definition, is, that *CHRIST died for our sins.*†—*How* was this gospel preached to our fathers in the wilderness? It was preached to their eyes, by many expressive emblems; especially, by slaughtered animals, and bleeding victims. By which CHRIST was almost continually, though not so evidently as in these latter times, *set forth crucified* ‡ for sinners.

In this sense alone, those carnal usages were worthy the wisdom of GOD to appoint, and the majesty of GOD to accept.—This gave them a peculiar *dignity* and *importance*; and set them far above all the similar observances, used in the heathen worship.—They were also, when thus explained, thus improved, extremely profitable to believers; as they directed their contemplation to the *future* sufferings of a SAVIOUR,‖ and ratified to their faith the benefits of his *ever-operating* sacrifice. Which, we are assured by an infallible voice, was effectual *for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant.*

Ther. So you apprehend, that, in those usages, practised by the antient *Jews*, the gospel was *emblematically* preached, and CHRIST in *a figure* exhibited.

Asp. Most certainly, Theron. And for this cause, under the law, *almost all things were purged with blood.*§ The multiplicity, the variety, the constancy of their sacrifices, were all designed to impress upon their minds, and familiarize to their thoughts, this great evangelical truth.—Was any one overtaken by a fault? he must present a vic-

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* Heb. iv. 2 † 1 Cor. xv. 3. ‡ Gal. iii. 1

‖ See Isai. liii. Luke xxiv. 25, 26. Acts xvii. 3.

§ Heb. ix. 22.

tim, and the priest must slay it, by way of *trespass-offering*. To signify, that the guilt which was contracted, could be done away only by the atoning death of CHRIST.—Had any one received a signal blessing? a beast was slain by way of *peace-offering;* as a public expression of gratitude for the mercy, and also as an emphatical declaration, that all good vouchsafed to fallen man, is owing to the REDEEMER's ransom.—Was any one to be invested with the *priestly* office, or admitted to minister in the sanctuary? a ram or a bullock must bleed, for the purposes of consecration and atonement.* In order to testify, that no man can officiate with acceptance in the worship of GOD: that no service, though of a religious kind, can be pleasing in his sight; *till* the former is interested in the merits, *unless* the latter is recommended by the death, of the great HIGH PRIEST.

And not only by their solemn sacrificial acts, but even by their *ordinary* meals, this grand lesson was inculcated. They were forbidden to eat the blood, in order to awaken and preserve in their consciences, a reverential and fiducial regard to the precious blood of CHRIST. The HOLY GHOST, assigning a reason for this sacred prohibition, says expresly, *Because the blood maketh an atonement for your souls:*† the blood of beasts typically, the blood of CHRIST effectually.—O! that *christians* would, in this particular, learn of *Jews*. Learn, at least, from *Jewish* ordinances, to have their attention incessantly fixed on that divine HIGH PRIEST; who, *by one offering hath perfected for ever*—not barely "conduced or contributed to the "work," but fully accomplished it. Hath obtained complete and everlasting redemption for—*them that are sanctified*.‡

Ther. Some offerings were made without any effusion of blood. What could those mean? or how could they typefy the sacrifice of CHRIST?

Asp. Perhaps, the apostle might foresee such an objection, when he made use of that guarded expression, *almost*

* Lev. viii. 28. Numb. viii. [illegible] † Lev. xvii. 11. ‡ Heb. x 14.

all things were purged with blood.—If, in these cases, there was no effusion of blood, yet there was a destruction of the substance. The *meat-offerings* were consumed by fire. Which is much the same to inanimate things, as shedding of the blood is to living creatures.—The same effect is ascribed to these oblations, as to those of the sanguinary kind. It is expresly declared of the poor man's *sin-offering*, which consisted of fine flour, and was burnt upon the altar, *It shall make an atonement for him.**—So that here also was, what we may truly call a *visible prediction* of CHRIST. The offerings which flamed, as well as the victims which bled, shewed forth our dying LORD. Whose "*one* oblation of himself once offered," comprised all the qualities, and realized the whole efficacy, represented by *every* other sacrifice.†

Ther. Another odd circumstance has often given me disgust, and been apt to prejudice me against the institutions of the old testament. Many of them appear mean, contemptible, and perfectly *puerile.* "Can these, I have "said within myself, be ordained by a GOD of infinite "wisdom, and transcendent glory? Can we reasonably "imagine, that a mandate should be issued from the court "of heaven, on purpose to forbid the *boiling*, and injoin "the *roasting*,‡ of some particular piece of meat?—Will "the great RULER of the skies, concern himself about "the precise manner of *killing* one insignificant bird, and "*releasing* another?||—Will he, who claims the worship of "the heart, have such an especial regard to a drop or two "of despicable blood, put upon the *tip* of the right-ear, or "the *thumb* of the right hand?§—Surely, such childish ceremonies are too minute and trivial for the notice, much "more for the solemn appointment, of the supreme MA"JESTY."

* Lev. v. 11, 12, 13.

† For this reason, it is thought, the apostle styles the sacrifice of CHRIST, *better sacrifices* Because, this *one* sacrifice comprehended the whole virtue, and procured every blessing, signified by *all* the other. *Heb* ix. 23.

‡ Exod, xii 9. || Lev. xiv. 4, 5, 6, 7. § Exod. xxix 20.

Asp. You will please to remember, that, when those ceremonies were ordained, it was the *infancy*, at least the *minority* of the church. If we advert to this circumstance, we shall have reason to admire, both the all-comprehending wisdom, and the no less condescending goodness, of JEHOVAH.—*His all-comprehending wisdom*, in conforming, so accurately and so minutely, the type to the event. Though the former was established long, long before the latter existed. Many ages before the *Desire of Nations* appeared, his picture was drawn; was presented to public view; and is now found to correspond, in every feature, with the illustrious original. What hand could be equal to such a task? Only the hand of an Omniscient LIMNER.—*His condescending goodness*, in adapting the tenour of his revelation to the state of his people; *speaking unto them, even as unto babes* * Not by naked precepts, or abstracted truths; but by earthly similitudes, and (if I may so express myself) by embodied instructions. Such as were level to their low capacities, and calculated to affect their dull apprehensions.

The institutions to which you allude, were undoubtedly mean and trifling, if considered *in themselves*. Accordingly, their majestic AUTHOR cautions his people, against such erroneous and unworthy notions. "*I spake* "*not unto your fathers, nor commanded them, in the day* "*that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning* "*burnt-offerings or sacrifices.*† It was not my design, "that they should acquiesce in the shadow, and neglect "the substance. I never intended, that they should rest "in the porch; but pass through these inferior ordinances, "to much sublimer things, *CHRIST* and spiritual bles- "sings were principally in my view. To which all the "*Mosaical* usages were relative, subservient, and one con- "tinual manduction."—Considered in this light; as bearing a reference to the ever blessed MEDIATOR; as emblems of his person, or pledges of his grace; they acquire a real magnificence, and convey the most salutary lessons.

* Cor. iii. 1. † Jer. vii. 22

The blood put upon the tip of the right-ear, and the thumb of the right-hand, denotes our *personal* application of the death of CHRIST. Without which all its virtue, though boundless and inconceivable, will profit us nothing. Those particular parts of the body, may signify the *perceptive* and *executive* faculties: in both which we offend, and for both which we need the great propitiation.—Of the two birds you mention, one was to be *killed*, and the other was to *fly away*, after it had been dipped in the blood of its fellow. Thus the LORD JESUS was slain for our sins: and we being *washed* in his blood; being interested in the atonement of our holy Victim, and elder Brother; are acquitted from guilt, and *escape* condemnation.—Concerning the *Paschal Lamb*, it was particularly enjoined; that the flesh *should not be eaten raw, nor sodden with water, but roasted with fire*. As to every offering from the herd or from the flock, the fat and the inwards were, by an express command of GOD, delivered up to the devouring flame. All this was an emblem of that tremendous indignation, which is *poured out like fire*;* which *seized* our immaculate SACRIFICE, that it might *spare* polluted sinners; and which must have consumed utterly any mediator, who was less than infinite, or other than divine.

Had you, while unacquainted with experimental philosophy, beheld our renowned *Newton*; blowing, with great assiduity and attention, his little watery bladders into the air; you would, probably, have despised the venerable philosopher, and have thought him an *hoary ideot*. But when you was made to understand; that, in every one of those volatile sopy bubbles, he discovered the beauteous *colours* of the *rain-bow*; that, from this seemingly childish experiment, he explained the formation of the finest appearance in nature; you would then entertain a different notion both of the man and of his employ.—So, when you discern the blessed *JESUS, looking forth at these windows, and shewing himself through these lattices*† of the *Jewish* oeconomy; you will, I hope, conceive a higher opinion of them, and derive richer advantage from them.

* Nah. i. 6. † Cantic. ii. 9.

Ther. There are several *Persons,* as well as ritual observances, of a very singular character, mentioned in the *Mosaic* law. The *Leper,* for instance, the *Nazarite,* with others of the same antiquated and grotesque stamp. These are not only mentioned, but their case is very circumstantially, and with no small solemnity, described. All which seem, to me at least, so many pompous, but *unmeaning* narratives; that convey no manner of edification to readers in the present age.—I have frequently had an inclination, and now I have a proper opportunity, to ask your opinion upon these points.

Asp. I am obliged to you, Theron, for giving me the hint. What you propose, is by no means foreign to the topic of our discourse.—Those persons were truly remarkable; neither are the peculiarities of their case recorded in vain. They picture out, in *dismal* and *delightful* colours, the sinner and the SAVIOUR.—To know ourselves, and to know *CHRIST,* is true wisdom; is indeed the consummation of all knowledge. Here, we have a lecture of hieroglyphical instruction, on both those important subjects.

The *leper** was an emblem of a *sinner.*—His disease extremely afflictive to himself, and intolerably loathsome to others. Sin likewise is the *sorest* of all miseries, to the wretch who commits it; and most *detestably* odious, to the GOD who forbids it.—The *leper* was secluded from the *benefits* of *society,* and all communication with his fellow-citizens. The sinner also, while impenitent and unpardoned, is an *alien* from the commonwealth of *Israel;*† without any enjoyment of the comforts, or any interest in the privileges of the gospel. If he dies in this condition, he must be for ever *shut out* from the kingdom of heaven; for ever *cut off* from the presence of the LORD.

The contagion was sometimes so *pestilent;* that it not only tainted the cloathes of the diseased, but spread itself over the walls of his house, and infected the timber of the beams. It was sometimes so *inveterate;* that there was no other possible way of eradicating it, but only by burn-

* See Lev. Chap. xiii, xiv. † Eph. ii. 12.

ing the garment, and demolishing the building. Does not this give us a clear, but melancholy view, of *original* corruption? which has transfused its poison, through all the faculties of the soul, and all the members of the body. Nor will ever be entirely expelled, till death releases the former, and consigns the latter to the dust.

What could cure this terrible distemper, even in its *mildest* state? Not all the balm of *Gilead;* not all the drugs on a thousand hills; nothing but the *consecrated* oil and *sacrificial* blood, duly applied by the High-Priest. And what can heal the disorders of our fallen souls? So far heal them, as to purge away their guilt, and subdue the prevalence of their iniquities? No acts of mortification, no vigilance, nor any efforts of our own; nothing but the *atoning* death, and *sanctifying* SPIRIT of the blessed *JESUS.* The malignity and virulence of this plague of the heart, are absolutely incorrigible by any other remedy. But, blessed be divine grace, *this* remedy, provided by our great HIGH-PRIEST, and administered by our great PHYSICIAN, is sovereign, is infallible.

The case of the *Nazarites** was the very reverse of the state of the *Lepers. Her Nazarites,* Jeremiah says, *were purer than snow, they were whiter than milk; they were more ruddy in body than rubies, their polishing was of sapphires.*† A faint representation of the only begotten SON, who is *the fairest among ten thousand;* the brightness of his FATHER's glory, and the express image of his person; both GOD and man in one sacred, wonderful, adorable SAVIOUR.—*They,* during the time of their separation, abstained from wine; withdrew from secular business; avoided every kind of pollution; and dedicated themselves, in an especial manner, to the service of GOD. A type of that *glorious NAZARITE,* who was separated, for a season, from the fruitions of heaven: who was holy, harmless, and undefiled, both in his nature and all his conversation: who sanctified himself, and devoted his life and labours, his soul and body, to the glory of his FATHER, and the

* See Numb. chap. vi. † Lam. iv. 7.

redemption of his people.—The *Nazarites*, even when they had discharged their vow, and were ceremonially clean, yet were obliged to offer a sin-offering, a burnt-offering, and a peace-offering. So, the great REDEEMER, though he had *perfectly obeyed* all the perceptive parts of the divine law, yet he was required to offer up a sacrifice—even the *incomparably precious* sacrifice of himself—in order to consummate the work of our salvation.

Ther. Have you a sufficient warrant, for this strain of interpretation? Is it *sound*, is it *rational*, or conformable to any *authentic* standard of scriptural exposition? Methinks, it looks more like the child of fancy, than the offspring of judgment; more like the sally of a sportive imagination, than the result of a sober disquisition.

You cannot be ignorant, Aspasio, how the ruling passion tinctures the whole conduct. Hence it is, that they turn plain facts into profound figures, and allegorize common sense into pious absurdity.—Have you never seen the *mystic* interpretations of some antient, and I may add, some modern divines? The honesty of their design is transparent, and the piety of their hearts is unquestionable; otherwise, we should be tempted to suspect, that they meant to burlesque the scriptures, and disgrace their Author.

Who can ever persuade himself, that the supremely wise GOD, would send us to search for a *body* of *divinity*, in a *bundle* of *rods?* or set us to spin all the mysteries of christianity, from a few fleeces of wool, *ring-streaked, speckled,* and *spotted?** Thus to expound the scriptures, is, not to open them clearly, and apply them judiciously, but rather to whip them into froth.†

Asp. We have the authority of our LORD himself. Who has informed us—that the *brazen serpent* lifted up in the wilderness,‡ was figurative of his own suspension and death on the cross.—That the *temple*, built on Mount *Sion*,

* Gen. xxx. 39.

† *Luther* used to call such far-fetched and unnatural allegories, *spumam scripturæ*

‡ John iii. 14.

was typical of his immaculate body, in which dwelt all the fulness of the GODHEAD.*—That the prophet *Jonah*, lodged in the belly of the whale, and discharged from that strange confinement, on the third day;† was an emblem of his own descending into the grave, and rising again before his flesh saw corruption.

We have also the testimony and the practice of the chiefest of the apostles, for our warrant. Speaking of *Hagar* and *Sarah*, he expresly says: *Which things are an allegory.* A figurative transaction; where one thing is done, another designed; or the apparent history, comprehends a latent mystery.—He assures us, that the *rock* smitten by *Moses*, had a reference to CHRIST;‡ who was wounded for our sins, and is the foundation of our hopes. That the *waters*, issuing at the stroke, were significative of those spiritual blessings, which flow from a crucified SAVIOUR. That, as the former *followed* the sons of *Jacob*, through all the circumvolutions of their tedious journey; the latter accompany the disciples of *Jesus*, in every stage of their earthly pilgrimage.—Let the great teacher of the *Gentiles* be our expositor; and we shall see the *veil* of the *temple* dignified with a significancy, richer far than its costly materials, and curious workmanship. Its silk and embroidery exhibit, to the eye of faith, the pure and spotless flesh of CHRIST.‖ As, by rending the material veil, the Holy of Holies became visible and accessible; so, by piercing the body, and spilling the blood of CHRIST, the GOD of heaven was *manifested* in all his goodness, and the kingdom of heaven was *opened* to all believers.

Every reader must admire those *divided waves;* which, instead of overwhelming the *Israelites* with a resistless deluge, stood like a wall of defence on their right-hand, and on their left, as they marched through the depths of the sea.—Every reader must admire that *suspended cloud,* which

* John ii 19, 21. Col. ii. 9. † Matt. xii, 39, 40. ‡ 1 Cor. x

‖ Heb x. 20.

spread itself like a spacious canopy over the hosts of *Israel*; and screened them from the annoying sun-beams, as they passed through the sultry desart.*—Our admiration must be heightened, when we find *that*, which was a cloud by day, becoming a *pillar* of *fire* by night; and illuminating their camp with the most amazing, as well as the most chearing splendor.—But St. *Paul* discerned a greater glory, and a deeper design, in these unparalleled events. The people, he says, *were baptized unto Moses, in the cloud and in the sea.*† These symbolically represented, the baptism of water and of fire; or the application of CHRIST's blood to our souls, and the efficacy of his SPIRIT on our hearts. In the former of which, consists our justification; from the latter of which, proceeds our sanctification.

I fear, you would think my discourse, somewhat like the journey just now mentioned, if I was to touch upon the ordinances of the *civil* constitution. The ox not to be muzzled, in treading out the corn;‡ was a virtual provision for the maintenance of ministers, who "labour in the "word and doctrine." The fields not to be sowed with divers kinds of seed; linen and woollen not to be intermingled in the same manufacture;§ seem to prohibit all dissimular and unnatural combinations. Especially of a believer and infidel, in the bond of marriage; or of human righteousness and divine, in the case of justification. These particulars, with others of the same nature, I pass over. But I must not wholly omit the epistle to the *Hebrews*, which is the most unexceptionable vindication, as well as the faultless model, of allegorical exposition.

It is delightful to observe, what propriety of address, the inspired writer uses. He speaks to the *Jews*, in *their own* way: alludes to their own usages, ordinances, and ceremonies: proves them to be types of, and guides to, a more

* It is said, that the *Israelites*, passing through the desarts of *Arabia*, saw not a green tree, nor a shady spot, for many months. If so, this miraculous cloud, this grand umbrella, must be unspeakably serviceable and refreshing.

† 1 Cor. x. 2. ‡ Deut. xxv. 4. 1 Cor. ix. 9, 10

§ Levit. xix. 19

clear, a more benign, and in all respects a more excellent oeconomy. More particularly he displays the *transcendent superiority* of CHRIST and his gifts, even to those persons and privileges, which they held in the highest esteem. These, like the morning star, were introductory to, yet totally eclipsed by, the rising sun.

They had exalted apprehensions of the *angelic* excellencies. The apostle therefore celebrates the REDEEMER, as the LORD whom angels obey, as the GOD whom angels adore.—They always reckoned *Moses* to be the *first favorite* of heaven, and chief among the children of men. He lets them know, that *Moses*, with all his extraordinary endowments, was but a *servant* in the house of JESUS. It was his greatest honor, to minister unto this Prince of Peace.—As the priesthood and sacrifices were some of their distinguishing privileges; he shews the pre-eminence of *CHRIST's* office to all the *Aaronic* orders. He demonstrates the extensive and everlasting efficacy of *his one* atonement; in preference to every form, and the whole temporary series of *Levitical* oblations.

Ther. Thus interpreted, I must acknowledge, the book of *Levitical* ceremonies is *significant* and *edifying*. Whereas, abstracted from this evangelical improvement, nothing can be more empty and jejune. I once thought, that, to peruse those obsolete canons, was like sitting down to an entertainment of dry bones. But, if such be their import, they may yield marrow and fatness to the attentive mind.

Due care, however, should be taken, not to suppose a type, where there is no *apparent* foundation of analogy in the thing itself; or no *hint* of this nature given us by the unerring SPIRIT. Lest, instead of being guided by truth, we are bewildered by fancy.—And, when either or both these handles present themselves, I think, we should beware of straining the subject, beyond the bounds of a *just* and *reasonable* comparison. Lest, instead of following the clue, we stretch it till it breaks.—If the first caution is not observed, the sense of scripture will lie so deep, or be removed to such a distance; that none but persons of the most excursive imagination, can reach it. If the second is not regarded, the meaning of those divine volumes will be-

come so vague and volatile, that there will hardly remain any possibility of ascertaining or fixing it.

Asp. As to the expedience and necessity of these cautionary limitations, I have the pleasure of agreeing entirely with my friend.—Let our fancy submit to the reins of judgment, otherwise her excursions will be *wild* and *lawless*. Let our zeal borrow the eyes of discretion, otherwise her efforts will be *blind* and *extravagant*. And let all, thus tempered, thus regulated, be under the influence of enlightening grace. *Then*, to spiritualize the antient scriptures, will be to convert the stones of the sanctuary into the jewels of a crown; and to fetch, not water only, but milk and honey, from the flinty rock.

Then, how pleasing must it be, as well as instructive, to discover the blessed JESUS, in all the institutions of the *Mosaic* law.—To see his incarnation prefigured by the feast of *tabernacles*.* When the *Israelites* were to relinquish their houses, and lodge in booths. Even as the SON of GOD left the bosom of his FATHER, and the seats of bliss, to inhabit a cottage of clay, and sojourn in a vale of tears.—To see our spotless and divine VICTIM, typically slain at the joyful solemnity of the *passover*, and the anniversary feast of *expiation*.—To see his death, that inestimable ransom for our souls, presented to our faith, in every morning and evening *sacrifice*:† his intercession, that prevailing recommendation of our prayers, most sweetly expressed by the rich *incense*, which attended the sacred rite.—To see the various methods of *purification*; some pointing at the fountain‡ for sin and for uncleanness, opened in our REDEEMER's bleeding heart; others referring to those sanctifying operations of the SPIRIT, which act *as a refiner's fire*,‖ *or as a fuller's soap*.—To see, in the *city of refuge*,§ that inviolable sanctuary, that most perfect security, which CHRIST's meritorious sufferings, yield to the believing, and tender to every sinner.

* Lev. xxiii 34, 40, 42. † Exod. xxix. 38, 39.

‡ Exod. xxix. 4. Numb. xix. 18. Psal. li. 7. Isai. iv. 4. ‖ Numb. xxx § Numb xxxv. 11, 12.

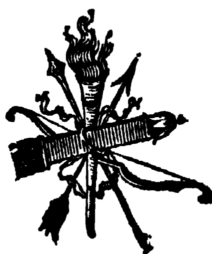
Was it so very affecting, and so very encouraging to *Æneas*, when he beheld the story of the *Trojan* heroes, pictured upon the walls of the *Carthaginian* temple? How much greater encouragement and joy must arise in the christian's breast, when he perceives the amiable lineaments of his everlasting FRIEND, pourtrayed in all the peculiarities of the *Jewish* worship, and in the most distinguishing events of the *Jewish* history! This must highly ennoble the bible, and inexpressibly endear it to our affections. This spreads *lustre, life,* and *glory,* through every page of that blessed book.—Though I would beware of indulging, what might be called a pious wantonness of imagination; yet I should much rather choose, in expounding the scriptures, to ramble a little with *Augustine,* among the groves, the fountains, and the flowers of the gospel; than to stumble with *Grotius,* amidst the dark and barren desarts of unevangelical criticism. I would see, or think I see my SAVIOUR, where it may not, perhaps, be easy to make out the traces of his dignity, to the satisfaction of a rigorous enquirer; rather than shut my eyes upon the display of his perfections, when they beam forth with the most inviting beauty.

Ther. How soon is our walk finished! how imperceptily has the time stole away!—These *garden-gates* I always used to approach with a particular complacency. They seemed to afford me a *welcome retreat* from the impertinence and vanity of the world. Now, methinks, I enter them with reluctance. Because, they are likely to put a period to this agreeable conversation.—However, as my Aspasio enters with me, I am reconciled, I am satisfied. It will be in his power to restore the pleasure which must not be interrupted. And this is what I shall ere long request; because, I have not spoke my whole mind upon the present subject.

Asp. Whenever you think proper, Theron. This is, to me, a *favorite* subject: and not to me only, but to incomparably better judges.—The man, who had been caught up to the third heavens, and seen the visions of GOD, determined to know *nothing* but JESUS CHRIST and

him *crucified.**—At the grandest assembly, that ever was convened on earth, this furnished the *principal*, if not the *only* topic of conversation.—And in that world, where the voice of joy and thanksgiving is perpetually heard, this constitutes the *burden* of the song; *Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to GOD by thy blood.*†

* 1 Cor. ii. 2. † Rev. v. 9.





DIALOGUE IV.

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THERON.

I MUST now desire my Aspasio to inform me —of *whom* that grand assembly consisted, (which he mentioned in the close of our last discourse) and *where* it was convened?

Asp. Can't you guess, Theron?—Was it in the Plains of *Thessaly;* when *Xerxes* drew together the forces of more than half the known world, and appeared at the head of all the potentates of the East?—Was it in the *Roman* Forum; when the senators were assembled in their robes, and the Barbarians took them for a synod of Gods?—No; it was on the Mount of *Transfiguration.* Where the SON of the true GOD, the LORD of eternal glory, shone forth in some of his celestial and native splendor; with garments white as the new-fallen snows,* and a countenance bright as the meridian sun. Where he conversed with two of his most distinguished saints, just come down from the regions of bliss and immortality: with *Moses* the meek deliverer of

* Mark ix. 3. The evangelist's description is, like the scene, *remarkably bright;* and the *gradation* of his images, is almost as worthy of observation, as the memorable fact.—The raiments were *white*—*exceeding* white—white *as the snow*—whiter than any *fuller* on earth could make them—surpassing all the works of *art*, equaling the first and finest productions of *nature*.—Nay, so great was the lustre, so sweetly, yet so strongly refulgent, that it *glistered* like the lightning, and even dazzled the sight.

the law; and with *Elijah* the resolute restorer of its honors. Where he was attended by three of his principal ambassadors; who were to be the reformers of mankind, and the lights of the world.

This, I think, is the most venerable and august assembly, which the annals of history have recorded.—And what was the topic of conversation, among these illustrious personages?—Not the affairs of state, nor the revolutions of empire; not the curious refinements of literature, nor the wonderful discoveries of philosophy; but the *ignominious* and *bloody* exit,* which the divine JESUS was soon to make at *Jerusalem*.—This circumstance, methinks, should recommend the subject to our frequent discourse; even though it was less eminent, for intrinsic dignity, and comfortable import.

Talking in this manner, they arrive at the *park*. Which, the moment you enter, fills the view with its bold, enlarged, and magnificent sweep.—It was diversified with level and rising ground. Here, scooped into mimic amphitheatres; with the *deer* pendent on the little summit, or shooting down the easy precipice. There, raised into gentle hillocks; some of which were canoped with a large, spreading, solitary oak; others were tufted with a cluster of tapering and verdant elms. Two or three *cascades*. gleaming from afar, as they poured along the slanting rock, or the grassy slope, gave a pleasing variation to the prospect. While they startled the timorous unexperienced fawns, with their foaming current, and watery roar.—*Grandeur* and *simplicity* seemed to be the genius of the place. Every thing breathed an air of noble negligence, and artless majesty.

In the center of all, rose a curious, *romantic mount*.—Its form was exactly round. Somewhat like a sugar-loaf, whose cone is lopt off, a little below the point.—Not coeval with nature, but the work of human industry. Thrown

* Does not this very delicately, yet very forcibly intimate, that the sufferings and death of *CHRIST*, were the principal end of the *Mosaic* institutions, and the principal subject of the *prophetic* teachings? For, is it not natural to suppose, that *Moses* and *Elijah* intended, when ministering on earth, that very thing, which their conversation dwelt upon, when they descended from heaven?

up, 'tis supposed, in those perilous times, when *Britain* was alarmed by foreign invasions, or bled with intestine wounds.—It was covered, all around, with elder-shrubs. Whose ranks, gradually rising, and spreading shade above shade, composed a kind of woody theatre. Through which were struck two or three *spiral walks;* leading, by a gentle ascent, and under embowering verdure, to the summit. At proper intervals, and on every side of the hill, were formed like *arbours;* with apertures, cut through the boughs, to admit a prospect of the country,—In one or other of these leafy boxes, you command, at every hour of the day, either the enlivening sun, or the refreshing shade. —All along the circling avenues, and all round the beauteous rests, sprung daffodils, primroses, and violets: which mingling with hyacinths and cowslips, composed many a charming piece of *natural Mosaic.*

How agreeable, as they climb and wind themselves round the hill, to reflect on the *happy change* which has now taken place!—Where steely helmets gleamed, or brazen shields clashed, the *goldfinches* twitter their loves, and display their painted plumes. The dens of rapine, or the horrid haunts of bloodshed, are become the retreats of calm contemplation, and friendly converse.—In yonder lower spaces, where the armed troops were wont to patrol; from whence they made excursions, to ravage the villages, or terrify the swains; the *fallow-deer* trip lightly, or the full-headed stags stand at bay.

From a small eminence, but at a considerable distance, gushed a couple of springs. Which, rambling through a grove, lost one another in the shady labyrinth. Emerging at length, from the gloom, they approached nearer and nearer, and fell into embraces at the foot of this hill. They rolled, in amicable conjunction, along the pebbly channel, which encircles its basis; and added their *sober melody* to the *sprightly warbling* of the birds.—Flowing off in one common stream, they formed the fine pieces of water, which beautified the park. From thence, they stole into the meadow, and widened into a *river.* There, enamoured as it were with each other, they glide by wealthy towns,

and sweep through flowery vales; regardless of the blooming toys, which deck the one, and of the noisy crowds, which throng the other.

So, said Aspasio, may Theron and his Selina, pleasing and pleased with each other, pass through the busy and the amusing scenes of life; neither captivated by the one, nor anxious for the other. With such harmonious agreement, and indissoluble union, may they may pursue the course, marked out by providence; their happiness *increasing*, and their usefulness *enlarging*, as they draw nearer the ocean of all good. Then, parted a gentle stroke of fate, like the waters of some ample stream severed by the piers of an intervening bridge, may they speedily reunite! reunite in consummate bliss, and never be seperated more!

Ther. I thank you Aspasio, for your affectionate compliment. Nor can I wish you, by way of return, a greater recompence, than the continual exercise of such a *benevolent* temper. For, to exercise benevolence, is to enjoy the most refined and exalted pleasure; such as makes the nearest approaches to the felicity of the eternal mind; who, as the Scripture most beautifully speaks, *has pleasure in the prosperity of his servants.*

But while we are seated on this mount, our situation reminds us of (what you just now mentioned) the grand conference relating to the death of *CHRIST.*—An event, for which you have indeed accounted; but in a manner, not the most honorable to the divine attributes.

Asp. I have represented it, as a *ransom* for our souls, and a *sacrifice* for our sins. If you disapprove my account, be pleased to favor me with your own.—For what purpose, according to *your* opinion, did that ever-blessed PERSON die?

Ther. To confirm the *truth* of his doctrine, and leave us a *pattern* of the most perfect resignation.

Asp. And is this all? shall we thus impoverish the riches of grace?—Was this notion *defensible*, it could never be *desirable*. But it has as little to support it, as it has to recommend it.—For, upon such a supposition, where is the difference between the death of CHRIST, and the death of the martyrs? *they* confirmed the truth of the gospel. In

their sufferings was obedience and resignation; the same in quality, though not in degree.—Upon such a supposition, what *benefit* could the antient patriarchs receive from the REDEEMER? Since none could be improved by the example of his patience, or the pattern of his obedience, till they were actually exhibited.—Or how could *CHRIST* be styled, *the LAMB slain from the foundation of the world?** The advantages of whose death, commenced from the very beginning, as they will be prolonged even to the end of time.

Not to depend on consequential arguments, let us hear the express declaration of our divine MASTER himself: *This is my blood, which is shed*—for what? to give credibility to my gospel, or yield an example of entire resignation? rather—*for the remission of sins.*† Will any one attempt to make, the remission of sins, and the proposal of a pattern or the ratification of a doctrine, synonimous terms?—They, who can torture and transmute the genuine sense of words, at this extraordinary rate, may metamorphose any expression into any meaning.

If then we would consider our LORD's death, in its *due amplitude;* we must consider it, both as a pattern of piety, and as a ransom for sinners. We must neither separate nor confound these very distinct, yet very consistent effects.

Ther. Is it not inconsistent with the acknowledged principles of justice, that the innocent should be punished, instead of the offender?

Asp. If the innocent person has an *absolute* power over his own life; *willingly* substitutes himself in the place of the guilty; and, by his vicarious sufferings, fully answers all the purposes of a *righteous* government;—In this case, which was the case with our LORD, I see not the least repugnancy to the rules of justice.

The bible, that authentic transcript of the counsels of heaven, avows; and, by avowing, vindicates the practice. *The LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all;* when

* Rev. xiii, 8. † Matt. xxvi. 28.

all we like sheep had gone astray, and were exposed to the stroke of vengeance, as those wandering creatures to the ravenous beast; the good SHEPHERD interposed, and the just GOD made that vengeance to fall upon him, which must otherwise have been executed upon us.—*He suffered*, says another inspired writer. *the just for the unjust;** *that*, by expiating our guilt, *He might bring us to GOD*—now, to his gracious favor—hereafter, to his blissful presence.

You will permit me to add a passage, from our common favorite *Milton*. Because, it is no less beautiful in itself; than it is pertinent to the occasion; must please the critic, and may expound the apostle.—*MESSIAH*, pleading in behalf of fallen man, thus addresses his Almighty FATHER;

Man dead in sins and lost,
Atonement for himself, or offering meet
(Indebted and undone!) hath none to bring,
Behold me then! me for him! life for life
I offer. On me let thine anger fall.
Account me man: I for his sake will leave
Thy bosom, and this glory next to thee
Freely put off; and for him lastly die
Well-pleas'd; on me let death wreak all his rage.†

Ther. The fine imagination of a poet, will hardly pass for a decisive argument. When we are searching after truth, we must attend to the dictates of reason, not follow the vagaries of fancy. And reason, Aspasio, remonstrates against your notion of a vicarious sacrifice. Reason! that primary guide and final test, both in discovering and determining the sense of scripture.

Asp. Suppose you then, my dear Theron, that none are in possession of reason, but the pupils of *Socinus*, and the zealots for *deism?* Or, that none make use of reason, in their religious enquiries, but men of this mould?

* 1 Pet. iii, 18. † Milton, Book III. 233.

Wrong not the christian, think not reason yours;
'Tis *reason* our great MASTER holds so dear;
'Tis *reason's* injur'd rights his wrath resents;
'Tis *reason's* voice obey'd his glories crown.
Through *reason's* wounds alone thy *faith* can die.*

Poets, you see, are far from disclaiming reason. Equally far is christianity from discarding the *sober*, the *sanctified* use of this noble faculty. When reason is under the influence and direction of the divine SPIRIT, we have the same high opinion of her excellence, as yourself. And, when thus regulated, we have, I am persuaded, the sanction of her authority, for all our sentiments.

Reason, as she operated in the sages of the heathen world, instead of rejecting, approved and adopted this very scheme. Approved it, even under the disadvantage of a mutilated and defective, or rather of a perverted and dead form.' The current language of the classic authors, and almost every historian of *Greece* and *Rome*, are vouchers for the truth of this observation.—As the *Gentiles* were unanimous in the custom of offering sacrifices, and equally unanimous in supposing their vicarious nature, so also are the *Jewish* writers

Ther. What man of sense, pays any regard to the *Jewish* writers? legendary they are, and extravagant to the last degree. Dotards I might call them, rather than writers.

Asp. They are, I believe, extravagant enough in their comments upon scripture. But they relate, with sufficient exactness and fidelity, the *prevailing belief* of their nation. In this case, their testimony is as unexceptionable; as in the other, their notions are chimerical.—Now, had it been a mistaken belief, surely our blessed LORD, that *infallible* judge, and *impartial* reprover, would have testified his disapprobation of it. Surely his disciples, who were actuated by the *unerring* and *undaunted* spirit of their MASTER, would have entered their protest against it. Surely St. *Paul*, in his epistle to that very, and in his treatise on

* Night-Thoughts, No. IV.

that very subject, would have set himself to rectify such an error; and have weeded out the tares, before he sowed the good seed. But there is not the least hint of this kind, in all the discourses of our SAVIOUR, or in all the writings of his apostles.

They speak to a people, who were accustomed to look upon their sacrifices, as piacular oblations,* and a typical expiation of guilt. They speak of our REDEEMER's crucifixion, and the benefits of his death, in those sacrificial terms, which were of *current* use, and *established* signification. If, therefore, the popular opinion was improper, their manner of expression and address, must be calculated rather to authenticate error, than to propagate truth.—So that, I think, even the silence of the inspired penman on this occasion, is but little inferior to a loud attestation. Did they only say nothing *against* the doctrine of satisfaction by sacrifice; it would, in effect, and circumstances considered, be saying abundance *for* it.—But they are very copious and explicit upon the point.

Ther. Where are they so copious? If you have such a heap of their allegations, it will be easy to pick out a few, and give us a specimen.

Asp. It is as easy, Theron, as it is delightful.—*MESSIAH shall be cut off,* says the prophet *Daniel, but not for himself.*†—For whom then, and for what? *Isaiah* informs us concerning both: *For the transgression of my people was he stricken.*‡—Because, this is an article of the last importance, it is repeated; it is confirmed; it is explained, with the most remarkable particularity: *He was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.*‖—Our LORD himself asserts the same truth in the very same style; *I am the good shepherd, and lay down my life for the sheep.*§ St. *Paul,* in a multitude of passages, sets his seal to this momentous doctrine.—St. *Peter* main-

* This, I dare promise the learned reader, he will find incontestably proved by *Outram,* in his Treatise *De Sacrificiis.*

† Dan. ix. 26. ‡ Isas. liii. 8. ‖ Isai. liii. 5. § John x. 15.

tains it, in very forcible words; *Who his own self bare our sins, in his own body on the tree.**

The sacred writers not only assert this capital article, but use every diversity of speech, in order to give it the fullest evidence, and the strongest establishment. *He made* reconciliation *for the sins of his people* †. *JESUS CHRIST the righteous is the* propitiation *for our sins* ‡. *He loved us and* washed *us from our sins in his own blood* ||. *He was* made sin *for us, though he knew no sin* §.

Ther. No body makes any objection to these texts. But the sense, the *true sense* of such phrases, is the thing in question.

Asp. What you call the question, to me appears so plain, as not to want a decision, or admit of a doubt.

However, since you seem to demand a *critical scrutiny*, it will not be thought pedantic, if I make an observation or two upon the original languages: or rather, as you are not acquainted with the *Hebrew*, upon that language, of which you yourself are a judge and a master.

If one died for all, then were all dead. The preposition in this connection, must necessarily signify more than, "on "our account, or for our advantage." Because, if it be taken in this unsettled rambling sense, the Apostle's argument is vague and inconclusive.—In case our LORD had suffered, only "to free us from some evil, and procure us "some benefit;" this would by no means imply, that *all were dead;* under the sentence of condemnation; obnoxious and doomed to death. The utmost, you can infer from such premises, is; that all stood in need of a deliverance from some evil, or wanted the procurement of some good. Whereas, suppose the sacred writer to intend, that our LORD's death was truly vicarious, and undergone in our stead; that he suffered, what was *our* due, and *our* doom; then, the reasoning is just, and the inference undeniable.

* 1 Pet. ii. 24. Very forcible words indeed---He *bare---Himself bare our sins---in his own body.* Intended, one would imagine, to make the article of our LORD's vicarious sufferings, *clear* beyond all misapprehension, and *sure* beyond all doubt.

† Heb. ii. 17. ‡ 1 John ii. 2. || Rev. i. 5. § 2 Cor. v. 21.

He gave himself a ransom for all. If this does not imply the notion of *vicarious*, I very much question, whether language itself can express it. *Ransom;* which conveys a vicarious sense, in its most common and authorized acceptation. This added to all, renders the expression as determinate and emphatical as possible. Emphatical to declare the vicarious nature of our LORD's death. That it was really endured in our stead; and *thus* made satisfaction for our sins; *thus* ransomed us from death eternal.

Shall I argue from a more obvious topic; which has no such dependence, on the precise significancy of the original?—*Surely*, says the prophet. He speaks with vehemence, as of an affair which is very weighty. He speaks with confidence, as of a fact which is very certain. *He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows.** What can this mean, but he hath taken upon himself *that* affliction, and *those* miseries, which properly belonged to us?—Let us read on, and this meaning will present itself, in the clearest view. *We did esteem him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted:* we took him for a real malefactor, and thought that he was punished for *his own* misconduct.—In opposition to which injurious and false surmise, it is added; *But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities.* True it is, that he was wounded, not only by transgressors, but *for* or on account of transgressions. Yet not any committed by himself, but those committed by us.—May I not here borrow the Prophets language, and say with an air of certainty? *Surely*, this is the plainest proof in the world, that our sins were the meritorious cause of CHRIST's sufferings. And if our sins were the meritorious cause of his sufferings, then they must be charged upon him, and punished in him.

St *Paul* affirms, that *CHRIST has delivered us from the curse of the law.†* How? by taking our place, and enduring what we deserved. Or, as the Apostle himself speaks, to the same effect, but in a much more expressive manner. *by being made a curse for us.* Does this not evi-

* Isai. liii. 4. † Gal. iii. 13.

dently denote both a commutation of persons, and a translation of punishment? *He* suffered, who was innocent; not *we* who are guilty. He also suffered that very sentence, which the law denounced on us. For, it is written, *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things* †; to this we were obnoxious. It is written again, *Cursed is every one that hangeth upon a tree* ‡; to this *CHRIST* submitted. Now if *CHRIST* endured *that very* curse, which we deserved: if, by this means, he delivered us from *all* malediction; either this must be suffering in ***our stead*** ‖, or else nothing can be called by that name.

Shall I descend lower still, and refer our point to the determination of *illiterate* men?—Ask any of your serious tenants, what ideas arise in their minds, upon the perusal of the aforementioned texts?—I dare venture to foretel, that artless and unimproved as their understandings are, they will not hesitate for an answer. They will neither complain of obscurity, nor ask the assistance of learning. But will *immediately* discern, in all these passages, a gracious REDEEMER suffering in their stead; and, by this bitter, but expiatory passion, procuring the pardon of their sins. —Nay farther; as they are not accustomed to the finesses of criticism, I apprehend, they will be at a loss to conceive, how it is possible to understand such passages in *any other* sense.

Say not, this is an improper appeal; or these are incompetent judges. The Scriptures were written for *their* edification; not to exercise the ingenuity of subtle disputants, but to instruct the meanest of mankind in the way of salvation. Therefore, on fundamental articles, we may assuredly conclude, the expression will be easy, and the doctrine perspicuous: so that *he who runs may read, and the*

† Deut. xxvii. 26. ‡ Gal. iii. 13.

‖ "This (says Dr. South, in his smart manner) is spoke so plain and loud by the uni-"versal voice of the whole Book of GOD, that Scripture must be crucified as well as "CHRIST, to give any other tolerable sense of the expressions."—And not Scripture only, but the common import of language.

wayfaring men, though fools *, *shall not err therein.*—And, though I am far from under-valuing the aids of literature, yet, upon these momentous subjects, which are inseperably connected with our eternal felicity, I cannot but regard the *common sense* of plain, honest humble christians, as the very best of critics.

Ther. It has been said by a *learned* critic, that vicarious punishment or suffering, gives us too low ideas of the SON of GOD, as it sinks them to the pain and suffering of a malefactor, the very meanest idea we can have of them.

Asp. Be the idea ever so mean, it is plainly suggested by the word of prophecy; and fully supported by the attestation of sacred history. In *that* it was foretold, and in *this* it is recorded, that *he was numbered with transgressors* †—And not only by his accusers, who called him a glutton, a drunkard, a seducer of the people. Not only by his executioners, who led him forth to die with malefactors, and crucified him between two thieves. But by his Almighty FATHER also. By him *CHRIST was made sin* ‡: by him the only begotten SON was treated as a transgressor: by *his* hand and *his* counsel ‖ delivered he was, to endure the vengeance due to the vilest miscreants.

Yes, my dear *Theron*; that glorious PERSON whom the highest Angel adores, " suffered, as if he had been the cri-" minal, the pain and punishment, which we, or equiva" lent to that which we, the real criminals, should have" suffered.—If, to consider this, gives us a low idea; if to suffer this, was a deep abasement; how exceedingly *high*, and how immenssly *grand*, is the goodness and the grace manifested therein! the lower you draw the arrow on the string, the loftier flight it makes in the sky. And the greater our LORD's humiliation for us, the more wonderful and adorable his love to us.

* Isai. xxxv. 8. The word fools, seems to denote persons of slow understanding [illegible] dull apprehension; as Luke xxiv. 25. Or else it signifies those, who, for want of a cultivated education and the improvements of literature, are accounted fools by the sons of Science; as 1. Cor. i. 27.

† Isai. liii. 12. Luke xxii. 37. ‡ 2 Cor. v. 21. ‖ Acts iv. 28

Ther. As there cannot be a vicarious guilt, or as no one can be guilty in the stead of another, so there cannot be a vicarious punishment, or no one can be punished instead of another. Because punishment, in its very nature, connotes guilt in the person who bears it.

Asp. If you mean by guilt, the consciousness of having committed a sin, and the internal defilement consequent upon it, we never suppose such a vicarious guilt. It is not so much as intimated, that *CHRIST* was stung with remorse, or stained with the pollution, of the adulterous *David*, the perfidious *Peter*, and the persecuting *Saul*. But that he was treated by the righteous GOD, *as if* he had perpetrated these, and all the crimes of all believers, either in the past or succeeding ages.

If by guilt, you mean (what I think, is the true meaning of the word) the *charge* of a criminal action, and the *obligation* to suffer penalty, your assertion is nothing more than begging the question. It nakedly affirms the very thing in debate. And bare affirmations, unsupported by evidence, are seldom admitted as decisive proofs.—We, on the other hand, are inclined to believe, that all our criminal actions were charged upon CHRIST; and that he suffered the punishment which they deserved. The former of these, is not so properly called vicarious, as *real guilt;* resulting from sins, committed by one, imputed to another. The latter we readily allow to be *vicarious punishment,* sustained in their stead, whose sins were imputed.—For both these points, we have the authority of truth itself, speaking in the scriptures. *The LORD laid on him the iniquities of us all;* here is the imputation. *CHRIST has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us;* here is the vicarious punishment. And you know, to what casuists we submit the interpretation of these texts—common sense; and an honest heart.

Ther. Is not this *shocking* to suppose? *horrid* to affirm? If sin was really imputed to CHRIST, and guilt is the result of such imputation, then punishment was his due—justice might insist upon it—and he could not escape it.

Asp. To suppose this, is so far from shocking my apprehension, that it appears, even on your own principles, right

and necessary.—*Right*, beeause punishment, as you yourself have declared, always connotes guilt; I would add, arising either from crimes committed, or from crimes imputed. Indeed, the sufferings of CHRIST could not be of a *penal* nature, unless he endured them as under a charge of sin, and in a state of guilt. It is *necessary* to suppose this, otherwise how will you vindicate the glory of GOD? he bid his sword awake, and smite * the blessed JESUS. But shall the JUDGE of all the earth do wrong? shall he smite, where there is nothing but innocence? no sin, either personal and imputed? that be far from him! the thought be far from us!

Whereas, upon this supposition, it becomes a *just* and *righteous* thing, that GOD should inflict the most rigorous punishment; or, as the Apostle speaks, should *condemn* and punish *sin in the flesh* † of his SON.—I do not know, but this might be the cause of our LORD's silence, when he was accused at *Pilate's* bar, and at *Herod's* judgement-seat. It is probable, he considered himself as standing before a higher tribunal; and responsible to eternal justice, for the crimes of all his people. In this situation, and in this capacity, clear himself of *personal* demerit he could; clear himself of *imputed* iniquity he could not. *Therefore*, he was dumb; like a convicted and guilty person, he opened not his mouth. For though, as the SON of the most high GOD, glory and immortality were his undoubted right; yet, as SURETY for sinful men, tribulation and death were his condign portion.

And why should this be thought shocking? It is not the least derogation to the transcendent excellency of CHRIST. It casts not the least stain on the unspotted sanctity, either of his nature, or his life.—To bear sin, as a voluntary surety, is infinitely different from committing it, as an actual transgressor. To say, that CHRIST was punished for any misconduct of *his own*, would be false, impious, and horrid. To say, that he was charged with *our* sinful omissions and commissions; that he endured the punishment

* Zech. xvii. 7. † Rom. viii. 3.

due—in the plain and full sense of the word *due*—to them all; is so far from being injurious to his dignity, that it pays the proper honor to his *mediatorial* undertaking. It pays him the honor of—the highest obedience to his FATHER's will—the deepest humiliation of his own illustrious person—and the most boundless benevolence to mankind.

Ther. GOD is love, Aspasio all love. Whereas you would.

Asp.—not often interrupt a friend's discourse. But I cannot forbear interposing a query, on this occasion.—Is there, then, no *just displeasure* in the DEITY? What meaneth that solemn denunciation of the supreme LAW-GIVER? *The anger of the LORD shall smoke against such a man* *.—What meaneth that declaration of the Apostle? *The wrath of GOD is revealed from heaven, against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men* †—Or, in what sense are we to explain that alarming interrogatory of the Prophet? *Who can stand before his indignation?* ‡ Whence could those avenging visitations proceed, which destroyed *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* with a tempest of fire ‖ which swept away so many thousands of the polluted *Israelites* with a raging pestilence §? and consigned over so many millions ¶ of rebellious *Angels* to chains of darkness?

Surely, Theron, if there be any determinate signification in language; if any lesson to be learnt from the most tremendous judgements; it is, that the LORD, though free from all the discomposure of passion, is nevertheless *angry with the wicked* ‖‖; and will make impenitent offenders feel the effects of his holy indignation.

* Deut. xxix. 20, † Rom. i. 18. ‡ Nah. i. 6. ‖ Gen. xix. 24.

§ Numb. xxv. 9.

¶ *Millions.* The *number* of the fallen Angels is no where specified; and the veil sits deep upon the spiritual world; so that we can see no farther, than Revelation has discovered. Yet, I think, there is sufficient room to ground a conjecture, upon the reply which one of these execrable Apostates maed to our LORD. *My name is Legion;* (a word signifying a great multitude, five or six thousand) *for we are many.* If *so* many were employed in tempting and tormenting a *single* person, what armies, what myriads of these invisible enemies, must exist through universal nature!—It is an *alarming* thought; should [illegible] us fly to our Divine PROTECTOR, and Almighty DELIVERER. See *Mark* v. 9, and 2 *Pet.* ii. 4.

‖‖ Psal. vii. 11 Deut. ix. 3.

Ther. Does not your doctrine represent the all-merciful GOD, as a *rigorous* Being? who, when once displeased, will hardly be pacified? whereas the LORD himself declares by his Prophet; *fury is not in me.*—Men of satyrical wit would be apt to insinuate, that you had mistaken JEHOVAH for *Moloch;* and was erecting a christian church in the valley of the son of *Hinnom.*

Asp. We take our representations of GOD, not from the vain conjectures of men, but from the records of infallible truth. There he is described, as a *righteous GOD;* a *jealous GOD* *; and, to incorrigible sinners, *a consuming fire* †—Though wonderfully condescending, yet transcendently majestic. Insomuch, that none of the fallen race are permitted to approach his throne, but only through the intervention of a great MEDIATOR ‡.—Though unspeakably merciful, yet inflexibly just. Insomuch, that without shedding of blood, even the blood of a PERSON higher than the Heavens, there is *no remission* || of any offences.

When the LORD says, *fury is not in me* §, the words have a peculiar reference to his church: which, in a preceding verse, he had described as *a vineyard of red wine.* From his church, from his own people, his fierce anger is turned away, on account of the satisfaction made by their SAVIOUR.—Though his own people are the objects, not of his indignation, but of his love, let no ungodly wretches audaciously presume. It is not so with them. They are *the briars and thorns* ¶, mentioned in the next clause: cumberers of the ground, unprofitable and noxious. Them he warns; them he challenges; *Who will set them in battle against me?* let them come on; they shall find it a fearful thing, to fall into the hands of the living GOD.—Nay; he will not stay far their approach: *I will march against them,*

* Exod. xx. 5. † Heb. xii. 29. ‡ John xiv. 6. || Heb. ix. 22. Heb. vii. 26.

§ Isai. xxvii. 4.

¶ There is a fine contrast between the *Vines* and the *Thorns;* at the same time a regular continuation of the metaphor. As nothing is more common, than to see the latter shooting up amidst the former; so nothing is more common, than to have hypocrites intermingling themselves with believers.

his threatening; *I will pass through them; I will burn them together.* This will certainly be the case, if not in the present, yet in a future world. When once the master of the house is risen up, and has shut to the door, mercy is gone for ever. Then nothing must be expected, nothing will be then experienced, but *vengeance and fiery indignation, to devour the adversaries of the gospel.* GOD will then *execute judgments* on every soul of men, that has persisted in evil. With such awful severity will he execute them, as shall cause heaven to adore, and hell to tremble.

Yet in all this, there is not the least tincture of *that outrageous* temper, which in man we properly call fury. *In man* fury implies an immoderate degree of resentment, which will hearken to no reasoning, and accede to no terms. The gospel account proves, even to a demonstration, that this has no place in the divine nature. So far from it, that GOD, though highly provoked, has *provided* an atonement —has made *overtures* of reconciliation to his disobedient creatures—has even *besought* † a guilty world, to accept of forgiveness. This is the purport of that gracious invitation; which follows in the Prophet. *Let him*, let the wicked man, *take hold of my strength:* let him fly to my crucified SON, who is the power of GOD for the salvation of sinners; cleaving to his merits by faith, as some poor delinquent to the horns of the altar. Thus *he shall make peace;* all his iniquities shall be forgiven, and all my displeasure shall be pacified.—So that the insinuations of your satyrical gentlemen, are as egregiously mistaken, as they are shockingly worded.

You are a man of sense, Theron; and esteem that character, far above the idle reputation of a wit. As such, let me ask you seriously; is it not for the honor of the Divine MAJESTY, to exercise justice, as well as mercy? always to pardon, and never to punish, would be *tameness*, rather than benignity; a renunciation of holiness, rather than a display of goodness.—O! can it be right in us, so extra-

† 2 Cor. v. 20. It was an instance of singular compassion in the blessed GOD, that, though offended with *Job's* friends, he admitted of a sacrifice, and directed them to an intercessor; both typical of *CHRIST JESUS.*

vagantly to magnify the amiable, as to depreciate, nay even to annihilate, the *awful* attributes of the DEITY?—This, says a Poet, is the theology, not of christians, but of infidels;

> Who set at odds Heaven's jarring attributes,
> And with one excellence another wound;
> Maim Heaven's perfection, break its equal beams,
> Bid mercy triumph over—GOD himself,
> Undeified by their opprobrious praise:
> A GOD all mercy is a GOD unjust*

Ther. But we have lately been told, that the particular grace of the LAWGIVER is not obstructed by any demands of law and justice. For he can set them aside.

Asp. What! set aside a law, which is holy, righteous, and good!—Set aside a justice, which is eternal, inflexible, and infinite!—St. *Paul* gives a very different solution of this difficulty. He tells—not that GOD *set aside* his law and his justice—but that *he set forth* the blessed JESUS *for a propitiation.* With this express design, *that he might declare his righteousness* †; might demonstrate, not only his clemency, but his justice; even that *vindictive* justice, whose nature is, so abhor, and whose office, to punish sin.

This seems to be the import of the word *righteousness*, in the present connection. And more than seems, if we consult the following verse. *To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness; that he might be just* ‡, evidence himself to be strictly and inviolably righteous, in the administration of his government; even while he is the all-forgiving gracious JUSTIFIER *of* the sinner, *that believeth in JESUS.*—According to this plan, *mercy and truth meet together; righteousness and peace kiss each other* ‖. All the attributes harmo-

* Night Thoughts, No. IV. † Rom. iii. 25.

‡ Rom. iii. 26. The attribute of justice *must* be preserved inviolate. And inviolate it is preserved, if there was a real infliction of punishment on our *SAVIOUR*. Nothing else can thoroughly *clear up* this great Evangelical *paradox.* *JUST*, YET *JUSTIFIER* OF THE UNGODLY.

‖ Psal. lxxxv. 10.

nize; every attribute is glorified, and not one superseded, no, not so much as clouded.

Ther. If some are verging to one extreme, are not you inclining to the other? Our ears tingle, and our blood runs chill, at the very thoughts of so severe a vengeance, executed on an object so worthy and illustrious.—Besides, how can we suppose, that the beneficent CREATOR and PRESERVER of men, should *take pleasure* in the sufferings of the most unblameable person, that ever existed? especially, since he himself has made this tender declaration; *I will have mercy, and not sacrifice* †.

Asp. A tender declaration indeed it is: signifying that GOD is better pleased with the duties of humanity and charity, than with the most costly and pompous train of sacrifices. Nay, that he will even dispense with the observance of *his own* ceremonial institutions, when they interfere with our exercise of beneficence *one to another*. Thus resigning (so admirable is his goodness) the services due to himself, for the benefit and comfort of his creatures—But this has no sort of relation to the death of CHRIST. In which mercy and sacrifice, were not disjoined, but united. Which had, therefore, every requisite, to make it most perfectly acceptable to the KING of Heaven.

We are assured by a Prophet, that *it pleased the LORD to bruise* his holy Child JESUS. GOD not only gave up his SON to sufferings, but gave him up with a divine complacency.—In like manner, the blessed JESUS addressed himself to the dreadful task, not only without reluctance, but with the utmost alacrity. *I delight to do thy will*, was the language of his soul.—Should you ask; how could the SON take pleasure in undergoing, or the FATHER in inflicting, the most agonizing sorrows? I answer; on account of that grand series of advantages, which, resulting from thence, will extend—upwards to Heaven—downwards to Earth—forwards through Eternity.

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† Matt. ix. 13.

Ther. GOD is often said to *forgive* our sins; particularly, in that sublime passage, where he proclaims his name to *Moses. The LORD, the LORD GOD, merciful, and gracious, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth; keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin.* Now, forgiveness is a *free* thing. Freeness is implied in the very nature of pardon. Take away the former, and you destroy the latter.—If an equivalent be given, pardon is no longer pardon, but a *purchase.* Forgiveness ceases to be an act of grace, and becomes the payment of a debt.

Asp. The text you quote is truly sublime, and equally comfortable. But you forget to mention one article of very great moment, which closes and completes the glorious character. Which seems added on purpose, to prevent any wrong apprehensions of the DEITY, and to guard against all abuse of the doctrine. *He will in no wise clear the guilty* ‡.—GOD will not, on any consideration whatever, absolve the obstinate, persevering, irreclaimable offender: neither will he acquit any of the guilty race, absolutely, unconditionally, or without such a satisfaction, as may repair the honor of his injured law.

We have redemption through his blood, says the Apostle, *even the forgiveness of our sins* *. It is forgiveness, you see, though bought with a price. It is remission, though procured by blood.—It is free, with regard to the obnoxious creatures, who are pardoned. For, it is vouchsafed, without any satisfaction demanded at *their* hands, or any penalty inflicted on *their* persons.—It is in this respect also free; that an interest in the great atonement is granted to us, without the least merit, or any *deserving* qualifications of our own.

In all this, GOD is not only merciful, but most tenderly and inexpressibly merciful. And will any one calumniate this majestic and venerable method of exercising mercy? because provision is made for the equal glory of truth and holiness? calumniate! Surely it becomes us to admire and

‡ *He will in no wise clear the guilty,* Exod. xxxiv. 7. * Eph. i.

adore, saying with the Psalmist; *Justice and Judgement are the habitation of thy throne* *. Justice satisfied, and judgment fully executed, in the Person of the MEDIATOR. are the basis or foundation of thy throne. The foundation on which thy throne of Grace is erected, and from which all its administrations proceed.

Ther. Does your notion of a propitiatory sacrifice, derogate from the goodness of the Almighty FATHER; and transfer all our obligations to the incarnate SON?

Asp. Is there not goodness, in *allowing* a substitute to suffer in our stead?—Is there not still greater goodness, in *providing* a substitute for us, without any solicitation on our part—Is there not the very highest exertion of goodness, in devoting a dear, an only, an incomparably excellent SON; in devoting HIM to the dreadful purpose?—This marvelous scheme, far, very far from obscuring, most illustriously displays, the superabundant loving-kindness of the FATHER.

GOD *so loved the world*, apostate, and polluted as it was. *How* did he love it? to a degree, unutterable by any tongue; inconceivable by any imagination; and only to be expressed by the infinitely precious effects. *Loved it* so, *that he gave his only-begotten SON, that whosoever believeth on him, should not perish, but have everlasting life* †. And does this derogate from the goodness of the Almighty FATHER? Not barely to give pardon and life, but to give them thro' the hands, nay, through the wounds, the agonies, the death of his divinest, dearest SON!

Such privileges, vouchsafed in any way, must challenge the devoutest acknowledgments. But, when attended with this additional demonstration of favor, they inflame us with gratitude, and transport us with admiration. They not only manifest, but ‖ *commend* the divine love: they shew it to the greatest advantage; shew it in the utmost perfection; with every circumstance, of grand recommendation, and high endearment.—By this means, blessed GOD, thou hast unspeakably enhanced thy benefits! thou hast render-

* Psal. lxxxix. 14. † John iii. 16. ‖ Rom. v. 8.

ed them, though invaluable in *themselves*, exceedingly more so, by the manner of conferring them!

Ther. Again in your elevations, Aspasio?—The world, you know, is grown very rational and inquisitive; will admit nothing, but upon clear evidence, and full conviction. We expect, therefore, in all religious enquiries, not the flights of fancy, or the sallies of zeal; but a sobriety of reason, and solidity of argument.

Asp. The world, rational as it is, seems, by the taste of the present age, no enemy to works of fancy. The world, therefore, may not be displeased with an affecting story. And a story, suitable to the occasion, just occurs to my mind. Such as may serve to shadow forth, though very *faintly*, the surpassing benignity and grace of our crucified LORD.

A certain *Asiatic* Queen, departing this life, left behind her three accomplished sons; all arrived to years of maturity.—The young Princes were at strife, who should pay the highest respect to their royal mother's memory. To give scope for their generous contention, they agreed to meet at her place of interment; and there present the most honorable gift, they knew how to devise, or able to procure.—The *eldest* came, and exhibted a sumptuous monument; consisting of the richest materials, and ornamented with the most exquisite workmanship.—The *second* ransacked all the beauties of the blooming creation; and offered a garland of such admirable colours, and delightful odours, as had never been seen before. The *youngest* appeared, without any pompous preparation; having only a crystal bason in one hand, and a silver bodkin in the other. As soon as he approached, he threw open his breast; pierced a vein which lay opposite to his heart; received the blood in the transparent vase; and, with an air of affectionate reverence, placed it on the tomb.—The spectators, struck with the sight, burst into a shout of general applause, and immediately gave the preference to this last oblation.

If it was reckoned such a singular expression of love, to expend a few of those precious drops, for the honor of a parent: O how matchless! how ineffable was the love of JESUS, in pouring out *all* his vital blood, for the salvation of enemies.

Ther. My greatest objection is still to come.—If Christ suffered in our stead; he must suffer that very punishment, which was due to our iniquities. This your orthodox Divines affirm to be incomparably worse than bodily death; to be nothing less than the everlasting displeasure of GOD.

Asp. The punishment due to our iniquities, was shame, death, and the divine wrath.

As for *shame*—was ever shame, like that shame, which our despised REDEEMER bore?—Though Prince of the Kings of the earth, yet born in a stable, and laid in a manger.—When an infant, exiled from his own country, and a vagabond in a foreign land.—When engaged in the discharge of his ministry, accused of the most flagitious crimes, and branded with the blackest names.—When brought to his exit, apprehended as a thief; condemned as a malefactor; nay, the vilest of malefactors, a robber, and a murderer, is preferred before him. His executioners poured contempt upon all his venerable offices. As a *King*, they ridiculed him, by putting a mock-sceptre into his hand; and crowning him with ragged thorns,* instead of a royal diadem. They vilified his *prophetic* character, by hood-winking his eyes; striking his blessed head; and then asking, in cruel derision, *who it was that smote him* †. They cast reproach upon his priestly undertaking, when they sharpened their tongues with malicious irony, and shot out those bitter words; *he saved others himself he cannot save* ‡.—To render his infamy as public, as it was shocking, they hung him on a tree; and exposed him, defiled as he was spitting, and disfigured with wounds, to the gazing eyes and contumelious scoffs of numberless spectators.

If you doubt, whether CHRIST sustained the *wrath* of GOD, let us follow him to the garden of *Gethsemane*. A

* To have crowned the blessed JESUS with straw, would have been a vile insult, and treating him like an ambitious madman But to crown him with keen, pungent, lacerating thorns, was adding cruelty to their insults; unheard of barbarity to the most contemptuous mockery Matt. xxvii. 29.

† Scornfully insinuating, that his sacred prophetic office was fit for nothing, but to serve such despicable purposes, Matt xxvii. 68.

‡ Matt. xxvii. 42

scene, which I would always recollect, when I walk along the vertile vale, or expiate amidst the flowery garden, or enjoy the delights of any rural retirement.—He had no remorse, to alarm his spotless conscience; yet fearfulness and trembling came upon him. No violence was offered to his sacred person; yet a horrid dread overwhelmed him. He was anointed with the oil of gladness, above his fellows*. Yet so intense was his affliction, that it fetched tears † from his eyes, and forced that melancholy cry from his lips; *my soul* is sorrowful; exceedingly sorrowful; sorrowful *even unto death* ‡.—'Twas night, cold night; and though our Divine MASTER lay prostrate upon the earth, amidst the fall of chilling dews, he *sweat*—he sweat *blood*—yea, so sore was this strange, unseen conflicts, that he sweat *great drops* of blood; *running down*, in reaking streams to the ground.—What cause, what adequate cause, can be assigned for this amazing anguish? None but the wrath of his Almighty FATHER. Who was now become an inexorable JUDGE; treated him no longer as the SON of his love, but as the SURETY for unnumbered millions of guilty creatures.

Ther. Was it possible, that the innocent and holy JESUS, the *dearly beloved* SON of GOD, should become an object of his FATHER's wrath?

Asp. It was not only possible, but unavoidable and necessary. *Unavoidable*, with respect to the divine holiness; *necessary*, for the procurement of our redemption.—Sin was charged upon CHRIST; all the sins of all believers, in all ages and places of the world. And could the infinitely righteous GOD behold such a deluge of iniquities, (those abominable things, which he hateth) without expressing his displeasure? Or could the blessed JESUS be punished, *truly* punished for them, without any painful sensation of their horrid evil, and of that tremendous indignation which they deserved?

If this was not the case, who can maintain the dignity of his conduct, during the agony in the garden?—Was there no

* Psal. xlv. 7. † Heb. v. 7. ‡ Matt. xxvi. 38

pouring out of the divine displeasure? then his behaviour in that hour of tryal, did not equal the intrepidity of the three *Hebrew* youths; who continued calm, and without the least perturbation, while the furnace was heated into seven-fold rage *.—But if this was the time, in which, (no created arm being strong enough to give the blow) *it pleased the LORD to bruise him* †; if this was the time, in which the most high GOD *bent his bow like an enemy, and stood with his right hand as an adversary* ‡; it is easy, very easy to account for the prodigious consternation of our REDEEMER. No wonder that his heart, though endued with otherwise invincible fortitude, should become like melting wax. For, who knoweth the power of *that* wrath, at which the pillars of heaven tremble ||?

Ah! Theron; the vinegar and the gall, which they gave him to drink, were not half *so bitter*, as the cup of his FATHER's wrath. Yet, for our sake, he drank it off to the very dregs.—The nails, that pierced his hands; the spear, that cleft his heart; were not half *so sharp*, as the frowns of his eternal FATHER's countenance. Which, for our consolation, he patiently submitted to bear.—He was rent with wounds, and racked with pain; his bones were dislocated, and his nerves convulsed; a thousand thorny daggers were planted in his temples, and life flowed out at ten thousand gushing veins. Yet this, all this was gentle, was lenient, in comparison of those inexpressible agonies, which penetrated his very soul. The former, drew not a single complaint from his mouth: the latter, wrung from his breaking heart that passionate exclamation *My GOD! my GOD! why hast thou forsaken me?*—Astonishing words: surely a distress, beyond all imagination grievous, uttered them. Surely, the vengeance, not of men, but of heaven itself, extorted them, Every syllable of

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* Dan. iii. 16, 17, 18.

† Isai. liii 10. The Prophet says not, it pleased the LORD, that wicked man should bruise him; but, it pleased the LORD himself to bruise him.

‡ Lam. ii. 4. || Job. xxvi. 11.

which speaks, what the mourning Prophet describes; *Is it nothing to you all ye that pass by? Behold and see! if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, wherewith the LORD hath afflicted me, in the day of his fierce anger§?*

Here, now, is *our whole* punishment endured; shame of the cross, and the sorrows of death; the suspensions of the ALMIGHTY's favor, and the terrible sensations of his wrath.

Ther Be it so. Yet all this amounts to no more, than part of payment. For, these sufferings were transient; *temporary* only, not *eternal.* Therefore, the main circumstance, the most bitter ingredient was wanting.

Asp. In the estimate of divine justice, and in point of penal satisfaction, they were equivalent to our endless punishment. Especially, if we consider the severity of the sufferings, and the dignity of the SUFFERER.

The *severity* of the sufferings.—Let me illustrate this point by a comparison. At the last day, all those fierce, eruptive flames, which have raged in *Ætna*, in *Vesuvius*, and in every other burning mountain throughout the world —All those confined subterraneon fires, which have so terribly shaken the foundations of *Jamaica*, *Sicily*, and *Constantinople*—In a word; the whole element of fire, however employed through all the revolutions of time, whereever diffused through all the regions of the globe, will then be collected from all quarters, and burst forth in one vast, resistless, general conflagration. In *some such* manner, all that wrath, which was due to the innumerable multitude of sinners, redeemed from every people, and nation; which, if executed on the offending creatures, had been prolonged to eternal ages; all that wrath, contracted into one inconceivably dreadful blaze, was *at once* poured out upon the interposing SURETY; *at once* flamed forth on our heavenly VICTIM.—This will appear more than probable, if, among other particulars, we contemplate the unequalled magnanimity of our LORD, who is styled *the Lion of the Tribe of* Judah*; and compare it with his bloody sweat in the garden, and his exceeding bitter cry on the cross.

§ Lam. i. 12. * Rev. v

The dignity of the SUFFERER.—Had our SAVIOUR's sufferings been the sufferings of a mere man, or of the most exalted Angel, I acknowledge, they could have bore no proportion to our demerit. But they were the sufferings of the PRINCE of Heaven, and the LORD of Glory: before whom all men are as dust, and all Angels as worms —Was an infinite MAJESTY offended? an infinite MEDIATOR atoned. Weigh the dignity, the divine dignity of the REDEEMER'S person, against the everlasting duration of our punishment. It will not only *counter-balance*, but *preponderate*.—Finite creatures can never make an infinite satisfaction; no; not through the most unlimited progression of ages. Whereas, when our LORD undertook the work, being truly and properly infinite, he finished it *at once*.—So that his sufferings, though temporary, have an all-sufficiency of merit and efficacy. They are, in this respect, adequate; nay, on account of the infinitude of his nature, they are much more than adequate to an eternity of punishment.

It was *IMMANUEL*, it was the incarnate GOD, who *purchased the Church*, and redeemed sinners, *with his own blood**. The immense dignity and grandeur of our SAVIOUR, communicated their ennobling influence, to every tear he shed, to every sigh he heaved, to every pang he felt. This renders his sufferings as *perfect*, as their vicarious nature renders them a *proper* satisfaction. And though *the wood of Lebanon was not sufficient to burn, nor all the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt-offering* †; yet this sacrifice fully answers the exigence of the case.—This sacrifice sends up an ever-acceptable odour to the skies, and diffuses its sweet perfume through all generations: such as appeases heaven, and revives the world.

Yes, Theron; you must give me leave to repeat the sublime and delightful truth. It was GOD, *the great GOD, even our SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST who gave himself for us* ‡. His sacrifice therefore must be *inconceivably meritorious*. O! that sinners, the *vilest* of sinners, knew its

* Acts xx. 28. † Isai xl. 16. ‡ Tit. ii. 13. 14.

all-sufficient efficacy! they would no longer be holden in the bonds of iniquity, by that destructive suggestion of the Devil, *There is no hope**.

Ther. What valuable end could such vicarious sufferings accomplish? Suppose GOD, absolutely inexorable, and they cannot avail. Suppose him divinely merciful, and they are needless.

Asp. The difficulty you propose, I think, has been obviated already. So that I have no occasion to solve your dilemma, but only to answer your question. Which I shall do, first in general; by collecting into a point, the substance of this and the preceding conference.—These sufferings—as a *punishment,* gave ample satisfaction to the divine violated law—as a *sacrifice,* they perfectly reconciled us o our offended GOD—as a *price,* they redeemed us from every evil, and purchased for us a title to all good.

This is a subject of the most distinguished importance. Let not my Theron imagine, I would abuse his patience, if I dwell a moment longer on the favourite topic.—A topic, which attracts the attention of heaven, earth, and hell. The cross of *CHRIST* is the object of approbation and ineffable complacency, to the eternal CREATOR; of wonder and admiration, to all intelligent creatures; of alarm and anguish, to the infernal hosts.—The church of GOD, for above four thousand years, was continually looking *towards it,* with expectation and longing desire. We are are now looking *to it,* as the one foundation of our comfort; while other generations are rising, and will rise in uninterrupted successions, to behold it with renewed ardor and delight, and when time shall be no more, innumerable multitudes of Saints and Angels, will be looking backwards on it, with adoration and transport, even in the remotest ages of eternity.

Ther. True; but you have not mentioned the particular ends, accomplished by this great transaction.

Asp. I might enumerate many ends, all magnificent and gracious. I content myself with specifying a few. But

* Jer. ii. 25.

such as bring the highest *glory* to GOD—administer the most solid *comfort* to man—and most effectually promote the interests of *piety*.

Here we have a manifestation of inflexible justice, in concert with unbounded goodness.—*Inflexible justice;* in that the great and terrible GOD, though determined to exercise mercy, would exercise it only in such a manner, as might vindicate the authority of his law; might testify the purity of his nature; and declare the inviolable faithfulness of his word.—*Unbounded goodness;* in that he with-held not his SON, his only SON, but freely gave him up for us all. Gave up "the BRIGHTNESS of his Glory," to be covered with infamy; gave up "the BELOVED of his "soul, to expire in agonies; on purpose to obtain honor and immortality for apostate men.—The torments inflicted on all the *damned* in hell, are not so fearful a monument of GOD's justice, as those dying agonies of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. Nor could a thousand worlds, bestowed on every believer, have been such an act of superabundant munificence, as that gift of his ever-blessed SON.

Look we for *power* and *wisdom?*—To uphold the humanity of *CHRIST*, under all the studied cruelties of men, under the insatiate rage of devils, and the far more tremendous curse of the divine law*: to conquer sin, and death, and hell, by a person bound with fetters, nailed to a tree, and crucified in weakness; to expiate, by *one* offering, the innumerable millions of crimes, committed by all his people, from the beginning to the end of time: was not this power? matchless power? astonishing power?—And as for *wisdom*, how admirable was the contrivance, which could harmonize the seemingly opposite claims of mercy and of justice! could not only satisfy each, but magnify both!—Had punishment been executed on the wretched helpless sinner, mercy had lost her amiable honors Had the sinner been restored to favor, without *any penalties* sustained either by himself or his SURETY, justice had been set aside as an insignificant attribute. Whereas, by our

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* Isai. xlii. 6. *I the LORD will hold thy hand, and will keep thee.*

LORD's vicarious and expiatory sufferings, both are manifested, and both are exalted. Therefore the Scripture affirms, that GOD hath not only exercised, but *abounded in wisdom and prudence*—nay, hath abounded in *all* wisdom and prudence, * by this combination of righteous vengeance and triumphant Grace. Which is, at once, so honorable to himself and so advantageous to his people.

Ther. "Advantageous to his people."—I am glad you are come to this point. This is what I want to have cleared up. I am for those doctrines which glorify GOD, by doing good to man. Give *me* the religion, whose aspect is benign, and whose agency is beneficial. Not like a *meteor*, to dazzle us with a vain glitter. Not like a *comet*, to terrify us with a formidable glare. But like yonder *sun*, whose beams shed light, and diffuse joy all around.

Asp. Is this what you seek, and what you prize? then the *christian* religion, this doctrine in particular, will answer your largest expectations, and challenge your highest esteem. For it is rich with benefits of the most needful, the most desirable, and most exalted kind.

The first and leading blessing is *pardon* of *sins*.—Pardon, not of small sins only, but of the most *aggravated*, the most *horrid*, and of the most *enormous* kind. Be they flaming as scarlet, be they foul as the dunghil, be they black as hell itself; yet they shall be as the spotless wool, or as the virgin snows †: they shall, by virtue of this grand expiation, be as though they had never been.—Pardon, not of a few, but of *all* sins. Be they numerous as the hairs of our head; numerous as the stars of heaven! or innumerable as the sands upon the sea-shore; *the blood of JESUS CHRIST cleanseth from them ALL* †.

Hereby we have *victory* of *death*, and *admittance* into eternal *life*.—For thus saith the holy Apostle, concerning the poor sojourners in clay; *Seeing therefore the children were partakers of flesh and blood, HE also partook of the same; that by* undergoing *death, he might destroy him who had the power of death, that is the Devil; and deliver those*

* Eph. i. 8. † Isai. i. 18.

who, through fear of death, were all their life-time subject to bondage †.—And thus saith the venerable elder, concerning the triumphant inhabitants of Heaven; *These are they, who came out of great tribulation; and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the LAMB; therefore are they before the throne* ‡.

The *Philistines* rejoice[1], when *Samson*, the desrroyer of their country, was delivered into their hands. How much *greater reason* have we to rejoice, since the blessed JESUS has vanquished our last enemy! has made death the minister of endless life, and the grave a gate to immortal glory!—*Joseph* had cause to be glad, when he put off his prison-garments, and was clothed with change of raiment: when he was brought from the dungeon to the palace, and honored with a seat at the right-hand of the King. But is it not an incomparably richer blessing, to have our robes washed in redeeming blood, and our souls cleansed from all guilt? Is it not an incomparably *higher advancement*, to be admitted into the blissful presence, and to possess the everlasting Kingdom of GOD.

To comprehend all in a word—hereby are procured, even by the most unworthy creatures, all the *benefits* of the *new* covenant. Therefore, the blood of *CHRIST* is styled by a Prophet, *The blood of thy covenant* §; by an Apostle, *The blood of the everlasting covenant* ‖; and our LORD himself says, *this is the new covenant in my blood* ¶.—It is a privilege to know GOD, the infinitely glorious centre and source of all perfection? It is a most valuable endowment, to have his holy laws put into our minds, and his heavenly precepts written on our hearts? Is it a branch of real felicity, to have our numberless sins forgiven, and not one of our iniquities remembered any more? Is it the compendium of all happiness, to have GOD for our portion, and our exceeding great reward? to be his peculiar treasure, his loving and beloved people.—Of all these we may

† Heb. ii. 14, 15. ‡ Rev. vii. 14. § Zech. ix. 11

‖ Heb. xiii. 20. ¶ Luke xxii. 20

say, they are the *purchase* of IMMANUEL's blood: and whoever is truly interested in the latter, is unquestionably entitled to all the former.

Who then would refuse so *comfortable* a doctrine? which—

Ther. Is too comfortable, we might imagine, to be either *true* in itself, or *safe* in its consequeuces. Must it not tend to *embolden* the sinner in the prosecution of his vices? who need scruple to transgress, or be very solicitous to repent; if an all-atoning SACRIFICE has been offered, for every kind, and every degree of wickedness?

Asp. Would you have sinners *intimidated?* Nothing speaks such terror to the children of disobedience, as the bitter passion, and accursed death of CHRIST—All the rhetorical aggravations of sin, with regard to its loathsome nature, and execrable vileness—all the severity of vengeance, executed upon rebellious angels, or wicked men —all, all are weak and inexpressive, compared with the *dreadful emphasis* of this great transaction. For, if the LORD Almighty spared not *his own* SON, when sin was, not committed by him, but only imputed to him; how much less shall he spare *incorrigible* offenders, who both habitually commit, and obstinately persist in, their daring impieties?

If, by repentance, you mean an ingenuous sorrow for our transgressions; nothing is so likely to break the stony, or melt the icy heart, as these doleful effects of sin.—Let us imagine ourselves present at *Calvary*, and standing by the cross. See! the innocent, the amiable, the illustrious SAVIOUR, hangs on a tree. A tree, as torturous as the rack, and ignominious as the gibbet!—See! his face foul with spitting, and his back tore with the scourge. His veins stream with blood, and his heart is wounded with anguish. —There he hangs, abandoned by his friends; reviled by his enemies; and forsaken even by his GOD.—Can we reflect, that *we*, even *we* were the cause of this inconsolable misery; and not feel remorse in our consciences, or sorrow in our minds? can we reflect, that for us, for *us* he bore this amazing torment; and not smite our breasts, or be pained at our very souls?

If by repentance, you mean a *thorough renunciation* of all iniquity; no motive is so effectual, to divorce the heart from every abominable idol, and divert the feet from every evil way, as an attentive consideration of our REDEEMER's death.—Whose indignation does not rise against the infamous wretch, that betrayed the blessed JESUS? who is not ready to detest those envenomed tongues, which accused him; and those barbarous hands, which crucified him? Yet our lusts were more guilty, in this respect, than *Judas* or the *Jews*. Our lusts and evil deeds were the *principal actors* in this deepest of tragedies: how then can we endure those execrable iniquities, which were *the betrayers and murderers* of the PRINCE of life?—*He bore our sins in his own* bleeding, agonizing *body on the tree;* not that we should be emboldded to repeat them, but incited to abhor them, and induced to forsake them. That, in our practice, and our affections, we should be averse, be even dead to *sin* *.

If you would have *benevolence*, your favourite principle, take place and operate; it is impossible to urge so endearing a persuasive to universal goodwill, as this *kindness and love of GOD our SAVIOUR* †. How can we indulge the sallies of resentment, or harbour the seeds of animosity; when the meek, the merciful, the infinitely gracious REDEEMER, laid down his life for his *bitterest enemies?* how can we treat with contempt or indifference, even the *meanest* of *mankind;* since our divine MASTER gave his all-glorious person, for the vilest wretches and most miserable sinners?—Never was there so winning a call to disinterested charity, as the amiable example of CHRIST. Never so binding a cement of brotherly love, as the blood of the crucified JESUS.

In short; would you have people possessed of every heavenly virtue, and animated to the practice of every good work! nothing administers so powerful an incitement to them all, as a *lively* and *appropriating* sense of this wonder-

* 1 Pet, ii. 24. † Tit. iii.

ful Grace. Set home by the HOLY GHOST, it produces such a warm gratitude, and such a heart-felt joy, as are far more operative, than the most awful threatenings, or the most cogent reasonings.—so that, quite contrary to your suspicions, the native tendency of this excellent doctrine, is to suppress ungodliness, and promote piety,

Observe the present calm evening, yonder mild declining sun, and these soft balmy breezes. How they have unlocked the flowery prisons, and poured a *profusion of odours* through the air. How they have inspired the little songsters of the grove, and fetched *lavish harmony* from their throats. So sweetly will a true belief in JESUS CHRIST and him crucified, draw forth all the powers of the soul, in acts of ready and cheerful, and full obedience.—He is therefore said, not only to justify, but also to *sanctify the people with his blood* *.

—Let us consider the death of CHRIST, in this its full grandeur and extensive efficacy; and we shall discern the admirable propriety of the Apostle's remark: *It became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto Glory, to make the CAPTAIN of their salvation perfect through sufferings* †. It *became*; as act of *sovereignty* in GOD, it comported with the dignity and emblazoned (if I may so speak) the incomprehensible Majesty of all his perfections.—As an execution of *impartial vengeance* on our SURETY, it asserted the rights of divine Government, and secured the utmost veneration to the divine law. As an emanation of *rich indulgence* to us, it redresses all our misery, and retrieves our whole happiness.—In *each*, in *every* respect, it claims the most grateful adoring acceptance from sinful men: it will be had in everlasting honor, by the choirs of Saints, and the hosts of Angels; and it is worthy of that high encomium from JEHOVAH himself, in this *I am well pleased*.

Ther. I thank you, Aspasio. Your arguments have not indeed converted me, but they have strengthened my faith. I never was so unhappily mistaken, as to disbelieve the sa-

* Heb. xiii. 12. † Heb. ii. 10.

tisfaction made by our LORD JESUS CHRIST; made to divine justice; made for the sins of the world. But, I now see more clearly its reasonableness and importance; its chearing aspect on the *guilty* conscience, and its benign agency on the *moral* conduct.

Asp. I congratulate my dear Theron, on the thorough conviction of this important truth. May he be favored with more enlarged and instructive views of the fundamenal articles and may every renewed view be more and more influential on his heart!

It is wonderfully pleasing, to mark the process of vegetation, in this opening season of the year. How the hedges begin to bud; how the bud swells upon the admiring sight, and ventures farther into the inviting air; how the chearing green expands itself more and more, and is continually upon the advancing hand. Till it throws a robe of verdure, over plants and trees, over hills and vales, over all the surface of the earth. So, may our views of the incarnate GOD. and our faith in his grand atonement, be always progressive, and always operative! Till they have diffused their influence through the whole soul; have refined the whole soul; have refined the whole temper; and beautified all our conversation.

This is the way, these views of the incarnate GOD, and his great atonement, to evangelical holiness. And is it not the way of peace and plesantness? Reviving, ravishing thought! to have him for our bleeding victim! HIM for our great *propitiation!* at whose feet the armies of Heaven bow, and the Saints in light adore!—Reviving, ravishing thought! to have all our punishment sustained, and the *whole* curse of the law exhausted; so that justice itself can demand no more!—Nay; to have so perfect a ransom paid for our redemption, that it is not barely an act of favourable indulgence, but of truth and equity * also, to pardon, accept, and glorify the believer!—In such a method of recon-

* Therefore the Apostle says, GOD is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, John i. 9.

ciliation, how fully does the judgement acquiesce! how securely may the conscience rest!

Excuse me Theron. My affections are again upon the soar. But I clip their wings.—Only let me ask, is not this doctrine the *grand peculiarity* of the Gospel; by which it stands distinguished from every other religion, professed in the world?—Is it not the *central point*, in which all the lines of duty unite, and from which all the rays of consolation proceed?—Strike this article from the creed, and you reduce the mystery of godliness to a system of ethics: you degrade the Christian church into a school of moral philosophy.—To deny the expiation made by our REDEEMER'S sacrifice, is to obscure the *brightest manifestation* of divine benignity, and to undermine the *principal pillar* of practical religion; is to make a desperate shipwreck of our everlasting interests, and dash ourselves to death, on the very *rock* of *Salvation*.

Ther. Now, I believe, it is time to repair homewards. And I hope, it will be no disagreeable exchange to my Aspasio, if we resign our seat on the mount, for a place in the dining room.

Asp. Pray let me enquire, as we walk along (for I was unwilling to interrupt our discourse, merely to gratify my curiosity) what may be the *design* of yonder *edifice*; which rises on a small eminence, near the public road? It is neither a tower, nor a dwelling-house; but looks like a stately column, erected on purpose to beautify the prospect.

Ther. It is a sort of monumental pile. Erected, as the story goes, on a very memorable occasion.—Queen Eleanor accompanied King *Edward the First* to (what was called) the Holy War. In which he gained signal advantages over the infidels, and acquired a large share of renown to himself. After many gallant exploits performed in the field, a treacherous and desperate *Saracen*, being admitted into his chamber, under pretence of private business, wounded him with an impoisned dagger. The consequence of which, his Physicians declared must be inevitable and speedy death, unless the poison was sucked out by some human mouth. This might possibly preserve the royal patient, but would be extremely dangerous to the operator.

Dangerous as it was, his Queen claimed the office; insisted upon it, as the Consorts right; and executed it so *faithfully*, that she saved the King's life; so *happily*, that she lost not her own.—After this, she returned to England; lived many years; and bore several children. But, sooner or later, royalty itself must pay the debt to nature. Dying, on a journey to *Scotland*, she was brought back to the last and long home of *our English* Monarchs *, Wherever her corpse rested, in the way to its interment, a structure † (such as you now behold) was raised: as a public testimony to her merit, and in order *to perpetuate the memory of her conjugal affection.*

Asp. And should not our hearts be a *monument* of *gratitude* to the blessed JESUS? who drew the deadly venom, not from our veins, but from the immmortal part of our nature: and not at the hazard, but at the loss, the *certain* and unavoidable loss of his own most precious life.—He opened his breast, opened his very soul, to the keenest arrows of vindictive justice; that, transfixing him, they might drop short of us, "The poison whereof drank up his spi- "rits ‡," that the balm of peace might refresh *ours*.

O my Theron! let our memories be the tablet, to record this unexampled instance of compassion and goodness. Let our affections dwell upon the tragical, the delightful history; till they are inflamed with love, and melt into contrition.—If we want an *inscription*, let us make use of those noble lines, which, in the finest climax imaginable, describe the magnificence and grace of this most astonishing transaction:

——— Survey the wondrous cure,
And at each step let higher wonder rise,
Pardon for infinite offence!—And pardon

* Westminster Abbey.

† One of those structures stands on the high road, near Northampton. It is surrounded with a large flight of steps at the bottom; and ornamented towards the top, with four female statutes, in full proportion. A Latin inscription informs the traveller, concerning its occasion and design.

‡ Job vi. 4.

Through means that speak its value infinite !
A Pardon bought with blood !—With blood divine !—
With blood divine of HIM, I made my foe !—
Persisted to provoke !—Though woo'd and aw'd,
Blest and chastis'd, a flagrant rebel still !—
Nor I alone ! A rebel universe !
My species up in arms !—Not one exempt !
Yet for the foulest of the foul, he dies * !

* Night-Thoughts, No. IV.





DIALOGUE IV.



ASPASIO, having some letters of importance to answer, as soon as the cloth was taken away, retired from table.—His epistolary engagements being dispatched, he enquired for Theron. The servants informed him, that their master walked into the garden. A very little search found him, seated on an airy mount, and sheltered by an *elegant harbour*.

Strange and substantial plants of *Liburnum* formed the shell; while the slender and flexile shoots of *Syringa* filled up the interstices.—Was it to compliment, as well as to accommodate their worthy guests, that the shrubs interwove the luxuriant foliage? Was it to represent those tender, but close attachments, which had united their affections, and blended their interests?—I will not too positively ascribe such a design to the disposition of the branches. They composed, however, by their twining embraces, no inexpressive emblem of the endearments and the advantages of friendship. They composed a canopy, of the freshest verdure, and of the thickest texture. So thick, that it entirely excluded the sultry ray; and shed both a cool refreshment, and an amusive gloom: while every unsheltered tract, glared with light, or fainted with heat.

You enter by an easy ascent of steps, lined with turf, and fenced with a balustrade of sloping baytrees.—The roof was a fine concave, peculiarly elevated and stately. Not embossed with sculpture; not mantled over with

fret-work; but far more delicately adorned with the Syringa's *silver tufts*, and the Liburnum's *flowering gold.* Whose large and lovely clusters, gracefully pendent from the leafy dome; disclosing their sweets to the delighted bee; and gently waving to the balmy breath of Spring; gave the utmost enrichment to the charming bower.

Facing the entrance, lay a spacious grassy walk; terminated by an octangular bason, with a curious *Jet d'Eau* playing in the center. The waters, spinning from the lower orifices, were attenuated into innumerable little threads; which dispersed themselves in an horizontal direction, and returned to the reservoir in a drizling shower. Those, which issued from the higher tubes, and larger apertures, either sprung perpendicularly, or spouted obliquely, and formed, as they fell, several lofty arches of liquid crystal; all *glittering* on the eye, and *cooling* to the air.

Parallel to the walk ran a parterre; planted with an assemblage of flowers. Which was advanced, one above another, in gradations of height, of dignity, and of beauty.—First a row of *daisies*; gay as the smile of youth, and fair as the virgin snows.—Next, a range of *crocuses*, like a stripe of yellow sattin, quilted with threads, or diversified with sprigs of green.—A superior order of *ranunculuses*, each resembling the cap of an Earl's coronet, replenished the third story with full-blown tufts of glossy scarlet.—Beyond this, a more elevated line of *tulips*, raised their flourished heads, and opened their enameled cups; not bedecked with a single tint only, but glowing with an intermingled variety of radiant hues.——— Above all arose, that noble ornament of a royal escutcheon, the *flower-de luce*; bright with etherial blue, and grand with imperial purple. Which formed, by its graceful projections, a cornish or a capital of more than *Corinthian* richness; and imparted the most consummate beauty to the blooming colonade.

The whole, viewed from the arbour, looked like a *rainbow*, painted upon the ground. And wanted nothing to rival that resplendent arch, only the boldness of its sweep, and the advantage of its ornamental curve.

To this agreeable recess Theron had withdrawn himself. Here he sat musing and thoughtful; with his eye fixed upon a picture, representing some *magnificent ruins.*—Wholly intent upon his speculation, he never perceived the approach of Aspasio; till he had reached the summit of the mount, and was ready to take a seat by his side.

Asp. Lost, Theron! quite lost in thought! and unaffected with all these amiable objects; insensible amidst this profusion of beauties; which, from every quarter, make their court to your senses!—Methinks, the snarling cynic in his tub *, could hardly put on a greater severity of aspect, than my polite philosopher in his blooming *Eden.*

Ther. Ah! my dear friend, these flowery toys which embellish the garden, are familiar to my eye, and therefore *cheap* in my esteem. I behold them frequently; and for that reason, feel but little of the pleasing surprise, which they possibly may awaken in a stranger. Something like this we all experience, with regard to events infinitely more worthy our admiring notice. Else, why are we not struck with a mixture of amazement, veneration, and delight, at the grand machinery and magnificent productions of nature?

That the hand of the ALMIGHTY should wheel round the vast terrestrial globe, with such prodigious *rapidity,* and exact *punctuality;* on purpose to produce the regular vicissitudes of day and night; on purpose to bring on the orderly succession of seed-time and harvest! we wonder, when we read of the *Israelites,* sojourning forty years in the desart, marching backward and forwards over its burning sands; and find neither their clothes *waxing old* † by so long a use, nor their feet *swelling* ‡ with such painful journies. Yet we are neither impressed with wonder, nor affected with gratitude, while we enjoy the benefits of the

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* *Diogenes*—Whose house, we are told, was a tub; and his whole furniture, a staff, a leathern bag, and a wooden cup.

† Deut. viii. 4. ‡ Neh. ix. 24.

air, which clothes the earth as it were in a garment; which has neither contracted any *noxious* taint, through the extensive revolution of almost six thousand years; nor suffered any diminution of its natural force, though exercised in a series of unremitted activity, ever since the elementary operations began.

This draught in my hand, shews us the instability of the grandest, *most laboured* monuments of human art. They are soon swept away, among the other feeble attempts of mortality: or remain only, as you see here, in shattered ruins; memorials of the vain and powerless ambition of the builders. How strange then, that a structure, incomparably more tender and delicate, should be preserved to *old age*, and *hoary hairs!* that the bodily machine which is so exquisite in its frame, so complicated in its parts, and performs so many thousands of motions every moment, should continue *unimpared*, yet act without intermission, so many days, and weeks, and months, and years.—How strange all this! yet, because common, how seldom does it excite our praise, or so much as engage our notice!

Asp. Your remarks are as just, as the neglect of them is customary.—Unaccountable supineness! though GOD *doeth great things*, worthy of all observation; *yea, and wonders without number*; we yawn with indolence, instead of being animated with devotion, or transported with delight. *Lo! he goeth before us*, in evident manifestations of wisdom and power, *yet we see him not: he passeth on also*, and scatters unnumberless blessings from his providential hand, *but we perceive him not* *.

This, though greatly culpable, is to be reckoned amongst the *smallest* instances of our ungrateful insensibility.—Are we not inattentive even to the work of redemption? that work, which, according to the emphatical declaration of Scripture, *exceeds in glory* †. Is by far the greatest, the most marvelous of all sublunary, perhaps, of all divine transactions.

* Job ix. 10, 11. † 2 Co.

The sea has been divided: the dead have been raised: a world has been created; created out of nothing; created only by a word. But what are all these miracles, compared with the incarnation of the eternal GOD? and of this matchless miracle have we not been careless, unmoved spectators? have we not admired many a trifling incident, more, far more than this wonderful dispensation of grace?—O Theron! are we not shamefully affected, even though the KING of Kings vouchsafes to exchange his throne, for the low estate of a servant, and the cursed death of a malefactor? though he is pleased, by the imputation of his active as well as passive obedience, to become *the Lord our Righteousness;* yet—

Ther. You are taking an effectual way, Aspasio, to rouse me from my reverie, and make me indeed like the snarling Philosopher. "Imputed righteousness is a scheme grossly "frivolous and absurd, utterly insufficient to answer the "end proposed; and, one would think, could never be "depended on, where there is the least degree of under- "standing, and capacity for reasoning."

Asp. Who is warm now Theron? may I not remind my friend, that the *resentful* is no more fitted to work conviction, than the *rapturous?*—Perhaps, you have not duly considered this subject; not seen it in the proper point of view. I have sometimes beheld a ship of war, several leagues off at sea. It seemed to be a dim cloudy something, hovering on the skirts of the horizon; contemptibly mean, and not worthy of a moment's regard.—But, as the floating citadel approached, and the masts arose; the sails swelled out; its stately form, and curious proportions, struck the sight. It was no longer a shapeless mass, or a blot in the prospect, but the *master-piece* of human contrivance, and the *noblest* spectacle in the world of art.

Who knows. Theron, but this sacred scheme likewise, which you now look upon as a *confused heap* of errors, may very much improve, when more closely examined. May, at length appear a wise and benign plan; admirably fitted to the condition of our fallen nature; and perfectly worthy of GOD to ordain, of man to accept.

Ther. I know not what may happen Aspasio. But there seems to be very little probability of such a change. For, though my last opposition was a *mock fight*; in my present objections, I am *very sincere.*—To go, by an *imputed* righteousness, to heaven! to obtain honor and immortality, by the obedience of another! who can credit such chimeras? who can swallow such camels.

When such doctrines are seriously advanced, I cannot forbear recollecting the scheme of Bishop *Wilkins.* Who would persuade us (good man!) to sail or ride post, not to our neighbours on the other side of the *Tweed;* not to our colonies, on the other side of the globe; but to our friends and allies in the moon. And this same voyage or journey we are to perform, by the help of some machine; to be constructed, I cannot tell where; to be managed, nobody knows how.—" Ay; says an arch lady; all this would be " very pretty. But pray,* Doctor, what shall we do for " lodging and provisions by the way?"

Asp. Don't you remember the reply to this ironical question?—" We will call says the Doctor, at one of your La- " dyship's castles. Which, for our singular conveniency, " you have been, these many years, building in the air"—Every attempt to enter into heaven, unless it be founded on the righteousness of CHRIST, I will venture to call *building castles in the air.*—And, if I may retort your own simile, not a whit less chimerical, than the whim of travelling to the moon, with all the luggage of flesh and blood.

But I beseech you, let us discard irony, as well as whim. Turn them both out of the court. If a jury is impanelled, to try me and my doctrine, I shall certainly except against irony. Generally speaking, he is neither a good man, nor a true. According to the best of my remembrance, you yourself consented to set him aside in this debate. Let us therefore, not affect what is smart, but let us urge what is solid,

Ther. Agreed. The notion of a substituted and vicarious righteousness, is absurd even to common sense, and to the most natural and easy reflections of men.

Asp. It may not, my dear friend, agree with our natural apprehensions; nor fall in with the method, which *we*

might have devised, for the salvation of mankind. But this is the voice of Scripture, and a maxim never to be forgotten; *GOD's thoughts are not as our thoughts; nor his ways as our ways**.

"This notion, you say, is absurd even to common sense." —A saying, upon which, I must beg leave to put a quere. It was, I own, absolutely beyond the power of common sense, unassisted by divine revelation, to *discover* this truth. —I will grant farther, that this blessing infinitely *transcends*, whatever common sense has observed, in all her converse with finite things.—But, if I have any the least acquaintance with common sense, I am persuaded, she *will not*, she *cannot* pronounce it an absurdity. To this judge I refer the cause.

And to *open* the cause a little, let me just observe, that GOD imputed his sins to our SON. Why else is it said? that, at his second coming, he shall appear without sin †. Plainly implying, that at his first coming, he appeared *with sin*. Not indeed committed by him, but laid upon him, or imputed to him.

How else could the immaculate *JESUS* be punished, as the most inexcusable transgressor? *Awake, O sword, against the man that is my fellow, saith the LORD of Hosts* ‡—Is not this the voice of a judge, pronouncing the sentence, and authorizing the execution, or rather, does it not describe the action of justice, turning the sword from us, and sheathing it in CHRIST?

[illegible] *CHRIST*, then, was our substitute, with regard to [illegible]*fying obedience?* There is the same reason for the one, [illegible] the other. Every argument in favor of the former, [illegible]ally conclusive in behalf of the latter.

[illegible]*r*. I freely grant, that *CHRIST* was punished in our st[ead]; that *his* death is the expiation of *our* sin, and our s[ecurit]y from penal suffering. But this—

[illegible] will undeniably prove, that sin was imputed to him; [ot]herwise he could not *truly* suffer in our stead, nor be punished at all. "And imputation is as reason-

* Isai. lv. 8. † Heb. ix. 28. ‡ Zech. xiii. 7.

" able and justifiable in *one case*, as in the *other*; for they " both stand upon one and the same foot; and for that rea- " son, he who throws down one, throws down both."— I should by no means have interrupted my Theron, were it not to introduce this answer from an eminent Divine. Who adds, what should be very seriously considered; " And therefore, whoever rejects the doctrine of the imputation " of our SAVIOUR's *righteousness* to man, does, by so " doing, reject the imputation of man's *sin* to our SAVI- " OUR, and all the consequences of it. Or, in other " words, he who rejects the doctrine of the *imputation*, " does, by so doing, reject the doctrine of the *expiation* " likewise *."

Ther I know nothing of this Divine; and, eminent as he is, can hardly take his *ipse dixit* for a decision.

Asp. I was in hopes, you would pay the greater regard to his opinion, because he is not in the number of whimsical fanatics.—However, *say I these things as a man*, or a man's authority alone? *Saith not the law the same also?* speaking of the peace-offering, the HOLY GHOST has declared; *If any of the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace-offerings be eaten at all on the third day, it shall not be accepted, neither shall it be imputed unto him that offereth it* Hence we learn, that sacrifices and offerings, when d[illegible] administered, were imputed to the offerer. Imputed him, for reconciliation and peace with GOD. And wh[illegible] fore? because they were figures of CHRIST, of his at[illegible] ment and righteousness. Which, in like manner, ar[illegible] puted to sinners, for their pardon and salvation.

Lest you should think this proof, being deduced [illegible] *typical* usages, not sufficiently conclusive—I would [illegible] observe; that the imputation of CHRIST's righte[illegible] bears an evident apology to another great and ackn[illegible] ed truth of religion. We did not personally comm[illegible] sin, yet we are changeable with guilt, and liab[illegible] condemnation, on that—

* STAYNOE upon Salvation by JESUS CHRIST alone, Vol. 4.

† Levit. vii. 18.

Ther. How! *we* chargeable with guilt, and liable to condemnation, on account of *Adam's* transgression! this an acknowledged truth? no; it is a position I must deny; I had almost said, which I cannot but abhor. None other could, in the eye of justice and equity, be blameable, for any offence of our first parents, but *they only*.

Asp. So says Theron; but what says St. *Paul?* yours may be the voice of natural reason, but what is the language of divine revelation! *In whom*, that is in *Adam*, *all have sinned*.

Ther. The words, if I remember right, are, *For that all have sinned*. Is it possible, that Aspasio should forge the hand, or counterfeit the seal of the HOLY GHOST, in order to establish a favourite notion?

Asp Impossible, I hope.—In the margin, the words are translated, as I have repeated them. For this interpretation I might contend, as not all incompatible with the original phrase: *By one man's sin death came upon all*.—It might be replied; is not this strange? is not this unaccountable? no says our sacred disputant; we account for it on this principle, because all have *sinned*.—Which sinning, if referred to every one's personal iniquity, would neither clear up the case, nor establish the doctrine. The reasoning would stand thus; "all are liable to death by the sin of "one, because all have in their own conduct transgressed." As this is absolutely inconclusive, the sentence should, if we would preserve the full force of the argument, be translated, *in whom all have sinned*. But I wave this advantage Let the words run into your mould, and the translation take your form. They are equally decisive of the point in debate – They assign the *reason*, why death came upon all men: *infants* themselves not excepted: *for, that*, or *inasmuch as*, all have sinned. How? not in their own person. This were utterly impossible. Could the babe, which received his breath in the morning, and resigned it at noon, be an actual transgressor? but in that first grand transgression of our federal head, even the infants of a day have sinned. Which sin, as it could not be actually committed by them, must, according to the tenour of the Apostle's arguing, be imputed to them.

Ther. Pray, what do you mean by that stiff, and unto me unintelligible phrase, *federal head?*

Asp. I mean what *Milton* celebrates, when he represents the ALMIGHTY FATHER, thus addressing his eternal SON.

Be thou in Adam's Room
The Head of all mankind, though Adam's Son.
As in him perish all men, so in thee,
As from a sacred root, shall be restor'd
As many as are restor'd, without thee none *.

I mean what the Apostle teaches, when he calls Christ the second man †, and the last Adam ‡.—The second! the last! how? not in a numerical sense. Not in order of time. But in this respect—that, as Adam was a public person, and acted in the stead of all mankind; so CHRIST was a public person, and acted in behalf of his people—That, as Adam was the first general representative of this kind, CHRIST was the *second* and the *last*: there never was, and there never will be, any other—that, what they severally did, in this capacity, was not intended to terminate in themselves, but to affect as many as they respectively represented. This is St. Paul's meaning, and on this the doctrine of imputation is founded.

Ther. If you build the doctrine on no other foundation, than *your own* particular sense of the Apostle's words; perhaps, your ground may prove sandy, and treacherous to its trust.

Asp. I build it upon my sense of the words, and I deduce it from yours, Theron.—But I am far from resting the whole weight of the cause upon a *single* text. It is established, again and again in this same chapter.— — Neither do I wonder at the prejudices, which you and others may entertain against the doctrine. It lies quite out of the road of reason's researches. It is among *the wonderful things of GOD's Law.* This the inspired penman fore-

* Book III. 285. † 1 Cor. xv. 47. ‡ 1 Cor. xv. 45.

saw, and modeled his discourse accordingly. Like some skilful engineer, who, though he makes the whole compass of his fortification strong, yet bestows *peculiar* and *additional* strength on those parts, which he apprehends will be exposed to the fiercest attack. So the wise, the divinely wise Apostle, has inculcated, and reinculcated, this momentous point. He has enforced it, with all the assiduity of zeal; and confirmed it, by all the energy of expression. —*If through the offence of* one, *many be dead—the judgement was by one to condemnation—by* one *man's offence death reigned by one—by the offence of* one, *judgement came upon all men to condemnation* †.—That there may remain no possibility, of mistaking his meaning, or of eluding his argument, he adds; by ONE *man's disobedience* MANY *were made sinners* ‡.

Ther. *Sin*, I am told by a celebrated expositor, sometimes signifies punishment. He farther informs me, that we may be said to sin in *Adam*, not by the imputation of his disobedience to us, but by becoming obnoxious to those sufferings which were due to his sin.

Asp. Then the Apostle's reasoning will stand in this form; *death came upon all men, for that all have sinned;* that is, " death came upon all men, because that all have " been punished; or, an obnoxiousness to punishment came " upon all men, because all are become obnoxious to punishment." A *goodly* strain of augmentation for an unerring writer to use.—Surely *Gamaliel's* pupil would disclaim, much more would *CHRIST'S* ambassador scorn, such weak and unmeaning chicanery. He mentions sin and its punishment; but never so much as hints, that they are intended to signify *one* and the *same* thing. He all along maintains a distinction between them; represents the former, as the cause of the latter. *Judgement, condemnation, death* are owing to *sin, offence, disobedience*. It is by the imputation of these, that we become obnoxious to those.

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† Rom. v. 15, 16, 17, 18. ‡ Rom. v. 19.

This account is clear, is natural, and wants no strained criticisims to support it. This account demonstrates the equity of that providential Government, which executes the sentence of death, even on those descendants of *Adam*, who have not *sinned* in their own persons. It also illustrátes the procedure of that sovereign grace, which treats as righteous, and entitles to life, even those believers in *JESUS*, who have not *obeyed* in their own persons.—What says our church? you have a great veneration for the *Church of England*, Theron.

Ther. I have. But, I fear, my Aspasio has neither so honorable an opinion of her Worship, nor so steady an adherence to her constitution. Otherwise, he would not so highly extol those ambitious and canting hypocrites, the *Puritans*. Who were the most inveterate enemies of our excellent establishment, and would have rejoiced in its utter subversion.

Asp. As to the Puritans, you will do me the justice to acknowledge, that I speak only of their *evangelical* tenets, abstracted from all political principles —As to myself, your fears are friendly, but I trust they are groundless. I would only ask; who are to be deemed the most affectionate and faithful sons of their sacred mother?—those, I presume, who most *cordially* embrace her doctrines, and most *dutifully* submit to her precepts. By this touchstone let my fidelity be tried. And for an immediate tryal, be pleased to repeat her ninth article.

Ther. I cannot say, that I remember the particular words of any, though I have often read, and very much approve of them all.

Asp. I wish you would commit to your memory, four or five of the most distinguished *. They are a valuable treasure, and contain the quintessence of the gospel.

These are the words of the ninth article. " Original " sin is the fault and corruption of every man, that natu- " rally is engendered of the offspring of Adam." It is the fault, says the pious Bishop *Beveridge*, and therefore we

* Especially, Articles IX, X, XI, XII, XIII.

are guilty of it. It is the *corruption* also, and therefore we are defiled with it.—Our homilies have recourse to no such palliatives, and qualifying interpretations, as my Theron's expositor uses. One of them affirms point black, that " in " Adam all men sinned universally." This seems to be a paraphrase on the text, whose translation you lately controverted.—In what sense our great poetical Divine understood the sacred writer, is apparent from the following words; which are supposed to have been spoken by JEHOVAH himself;

——— Adam's Crime
Makes guilty all his sons †.

And from another passage, where our rebellious progenitor, bewailing his aggravated misery, and the extensive malignity of his guilt, declares;

In me all
Posterity stands curs'd ‡.

For my own part I must confess, that, if the transmission of original depravity be granted, I know not how the imputation of Adam's destructive apostacy can be denied. If we had no concern in the one, how could we be justly punished with the other? —I say *punished*. For, to lose the primitive integrity of our nature, and inherit a depraved disposition, is at once a most deplorable calamity, and a most terrible punishment.—Corruption transmitted, and sin imputed, seems to be doctrines *indissolubly* connected. To allow the former, and reject the latter, is, in my apprehension, to acknowledge the effect without admitting the cause.

Ther. To make us parties in a covenant, which we did not agree to, can this be *equitable?* To ruin us for a crime, which we never committed, can this be *merciful?* surely, this is a flagrant injustice, never to be ascribed to the all-gracious GOD. A diabolical barbarity, add some, never to be mentioned without the utmost devastation.

† Book III. 290. ‡ Book X. 817.

Asp. I see no cause for such a tragical outcry of barbarity, nor indeed for any complaint of injustice. Not to insist upon the sovereignty of an all-creating GOD, and his unquestionable right to *do what he will with his own*,* I would only ask—did he not condescend to transact with man, not on the foot of absolute uncontroulable authority, but in the honorable and endearing way of a *covenant*?† —Were not the terms of this covenant, perfectly easy, and wonderfully gracious? *Wonderfully gracious*: for, they proposed a state of inconceivable and everlasting felicity to creatures, who were entitled to *no* happiness; had not the least claim to *any* good; no, not so much as to the privilege of existence. *Perfectly easy*: for, what was the condition on man's part? not any rigorous act of duty, nor any severe course of self-denial, but the free enjoyment of *millions* of blessings and pleasures, with only the prohibition of *one* pernicious indulgence.—Here then is made, on one hand, a promise of the most *glorious* reward, that GOD himself could give: and nothing required, on the other, but the *smallest* expression of allegiance, that man himself could wish.—And is this injustice? is this barbarity?

Ther. All this was equitable enough with regard to *Adam*; but why should we be condemned for *his* violation of the covenant?—Or how was such a constitution of things gracious, with us?

Asp. " Why condemned?"—Because, we should have been partakers of the benefit and the glory, if he had persevered in his duty. To this, I presume, none would object. And if they *would not* to the one, they *ought not* to the other.

You ask farther; " how was such a constitution of things " gracious, with respect to us?"—I answer; because it was the most likely means to secure the happiness of us and all mankind. Was not Adam, of all persons, by far the best qualified to act as a general head? he had a perfection of knowledge, to discern his true interest: a perfection of holiness, to capaciate him for obedience: and a perfection

* Matt. xx. 15. † Luke

of happiness, disposing him to perseverance. As none could have more eminent qualifications, none could have *so many* obligations. His own welfare, bodily and spiritual, was at stake: the eternal interests of his rising family, and of his remotest posterity were depending: the lives, the souls, the *everlasting all* of the whole human race, were embarked on the single bottom of his fidelity. Therefore, the felicity of every individual, that should spring from his loins, was a fresh motive to vigilance, an additional engagement to duty.—As *his* love to his offspring was more refined, more exalted, more godlike than ours, all these considerations and inducements must operate upon him, in their fullest scope, and with the strongest energy.—What an entrenchment was here, to keep out disobedience, and ward off ruin! an entrenchment, *deep* as hell; *high* as heaven; *wide* as the whole extent of the human species.

Here then I may venture to throw the gauntlet, and challenge the whole world. Let the most penetrating mind devise a scheme, so wisely and so graciously calculated to *ascertain the success* of a *probationary* state. If this be impracticable, then must every mouth be stopped. No tongue can have the least reason to complain. I, for my part, shall think myself obliged to admire the benignity of my CREATOR's conduct. And GOD may justly demand of all intelligent creatures; *what could have been done more*, for the preservation and felicity of mankind, *that I have not done?* *

Especially, when to all this we add, that the same ALMIGHTY BEING, who appointed *Adam* to be our representative in the first covenant, without asking our actual consent; appointed also CHRIST to be our representative in the second covenant, without staying for our actual solicitation. When we take *this* into the account, there remains not the least shadow of injustice; but goodness, transcendently rich goodness, shines forth with the brightest lustre.

* Isai. v. 4.

Ther. Goodness, Aspasio! this is surprising indeed. Why, if Adam's transgression be laid to our charge, we are *damnable* creatures, the very moment we exist; and are liable to the torments of hell, even on account of his disobedience. To term this goodness, is the greatest of paradoxes! To affirm it of the DEITY, is little less than blasphemy!

Asp. Let us be calm, my dear friend, and consider the case impartially. If it is not a real truth, I shall be as willing to relinquish it as yourself.

Is not death, eternal death, the wages of every sin? and if of every sin, then doubtless of *original*. Which is the *fountain*, from whence all the streams of actual iniquity flow; or rather the *abyss*, from whence all the torments pour. —That, which could not be pardoned, but by the humiliation and agonies of GOD's adorable SON, may reasonably be supposed to deserve the most dreadful vengeance. And it is affirmed, by an authority which you will not dispute; that, "for original as well as actual sin, the offering of "CHRIST is a propitiation and satisfaction *."

Does not St. Paul deliver it, as a maxim in divinity? that, *by the offence of one*, Adam he undoubtedly means, *judgement came upon all men unto condemnation*. † The import of the words, together with the connection of the passage, lead us to understand this of a condemnation to eternal misery.—*The import of the words*: for, they are doubled, to make them peculiarly strong in their signification: and each word, within the compass of this very epistle, is used in that awful latitude of meaning ‖. *The connection of this passage*: because, it stands opposed to that justification which is unto life. This, we are sure, includes the idea of an everlasting duration. And why should its tremendous counterpart be less extensive?

This sense is evidently *patronized*, and this doctrine most peremptorily *asserted*, by our established church. What says the book of *Homilies*, when treating of the miseries consequent upon the fall? ' This is so great and miserable

* Article XXXI. † Rom. v. 18. ‖ Rom. ii. iii. 8. viii. 1.

" a plague, if it had only rested on *Adam*, who first offen-
" ded, it had been much easier, and might the better have
" been borne. But it fell not only on him, but also on his
" posterity and children for ever; so that the whole brood
" of *Adam's* race should sustain the self-same fall and pu-
" nishment, which their forefather by his offence most just-
" ly had deserved §." Lest any should misapprehend the design of our reformers, and suppose the punishment to consist only of some bodily suffering, or the loss of immortality, it is added in the same alarming discourse; " Neither
" Adam, nor any of his, had any right or interest at all in
" the kingdom of Heaven; but were become plain repro-
" bates and castaways, being perpetually damned to the
" everlasting pains of hell."

Lest you should imagine, this might be written under a sally of hasty zeal, or that it is to be reckoned among the doting opinions of a credulous antiquity; let me remind my friend, that it is engrafted into the articles. Those articles which were approved by the Archbishops and Bishops of both provinces; were ratified by the general consent of the Clergy; and are, to this day, the *national standard* of our belief The ninth article, beginning with a description of our depraved nature, subjoins an account of its proper desert; " In every person born into the world, it deserveth
" GOD's wrath and damnation."

Ther. How *miserable* then is man!

Asp. In *himself* he is miserable beyond expression. But a conviction of this misery is the beginning of all happiness. *The valley of* Achor *is a door of hope* *

Ther. Explain yourself, Aspasio. You seem to deal very much in the incomprehensibles.

Asp. Such a conviction would demonstrate the *absolute insufficiency* of all human attainments, and all human endeavours, to procure life and salvation.—For, in case we could perform every jot and tittle of the divine law; offend in no instance; fall short in no degree; persevere to the very end; yet this would be no more than our present bounden duty.

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§ Homily on the nativity of CHRIST. * Hos. ii. 15. Achor signifies trouble.

Not the least pittance of merit could arise from all this Much less could this be sufficient to expiate original guilt, or remove the dreadful entail of the primitive all-destroying sin.

This, therefore, would most effectually preclude every false confidence; and *sweep away*, at one stroke, *every refuge of lies* †. It would lay us under an immediate, indispensible, and happy necessity, of betaking ourselves to CHRIST.— I say happy necessity; because then we should know, by experience, what each part of our LORD's awful yet tender declaration meaneth; *O Israel! thou hast destroyed thyself; but in ME is thy help* ‡.—We should then find, that as sin and misery have abounded through the first Adam, mercy and grace have *much more abounded* through the second. For, if we were ruined by a crime, which we committed not; we are recovered by a righteousness, which we performed not. A righteousness, infinitely surpassing whatever we could have acquired; even though our nature had been transmitsed to us, free from any depravity, and exempt from all guilt.

Ther. In your opinion then, and according to your scheme, *Salve* and a *Regimen* are better than a sound constitution.

Asp. No, Theron. My opinion is, that none can think himself aggrieved, or have any reason to complain, at that grand and beneficent regulation, which suffers the *glimmering* taper to be obscured or extinguished, but sheds abroad the *boundless* and *majestic* beams of day, And if any comparison be made between the most perfect human obedience, and the everlasting divine righteousness of CHRIST, it should be taken from the glimmering taper and the meridian sun.

Ther. I cannot persuade myself to admire such mysterious and unaccountable notions. They must puzzle some: will offend others: but cannot edify any.

Asp. This point, that *we all died in* ADAM; were undone by his apostacy; cannot *puzzle* the simplest, if unprejudiced

† Isai. xxviii. 17. ‡ Hos. xiii. 9.

mind. Nor will it offend any, but the proud philosopher, or the self-righteous moralist. And I assure you, I should not mention it, much less insist upon it, did it not subserve; and in a very singular manner, the purposes of *edification*. The doctrine of a REDEEMER, obeying and dying in our stead, is the very hinge and center of all evangelical revelations: is the very life and soul of all evangelical blessings. This doctrine is not a little illustrated, and comes very much recommended, by the imputation of Adam's sin.

Contraries, you know, cast light upon, and set off each other. Winter and its severe cold, make spring and its chearing warmth, more sensibly perceived, and more highly pleasing. Such an influence has the present subject, with respect to the vicarious obedience of our MEDIATOR. The more clearly we see the *reality* of the first, the more thoroughly we shall discern the *expediency*, the *excellency*, the *glory* of the last. The more we are humbled under a conviction of the former, the more we shall covet, or the more we shall triumph in the enjoyment of the latter.———The Apostle draws a long parallel or rather forms a strong contrast between them, in the fifth chapter to the *Romans*. He speaks copiously of Adam's guilt, imputed to all mankind for condemnation and death: that he may speak the more acceptably, the more charmingly of CHRIST's righteousness, imputed to all believers for justification and life. In that *dark ground*, he well knew, this fairest loveliest flower of christianity, appears with *peculiar beauty:* indeed, with all the beauty of consummate wisdom, and adorable benignity.

Ther. It really seems to me a thing impossible, that one man's righteousness should be made another's. Can one man live by the soul of another? or be learned by the learning of another?—Good Aspasio, never attempt to maintain such palpable absurdities. They will expose christianity to the scorn of infidels.

Asp. If infidels scoff at this conformable truth, their scoffing will be, like all their other cavils, not the voice of reason, but the clamour of prejudice.

My friend's objection insinuates, what we never assert; that the righteousness of CHRIST is *transfused* into believers. Which would, doubtless, be in fact impossible, as it is in theory absurd.—But this we disavow, as strenuously as you can oppose. The REDEEMER's righteousness is made ours, not by *infusion*, but by *imputation*. The very terms we use, may acquit us from such a ridiculous charge; as imputation signifies, "A placing to the account of one, "what is done or suffered by another." Accordingly we believe, that the righteousness which justifies, abides in CHRIST, but is placed to our account: that CHRIST, and CHRIST alone, actually performed it: that CHRIST, and CHRIST alone, personally possesses it: but that performing it in our stead, and possessing it as our covenant-head, GOD imputes it to us—GOD accepts us for it—accepts us as much, *as if* we had, on our own behalf and in our own persons, severally fulfilled it.

Though one man cannot live, be actuated with a principle of life, *by the soul* of another; yet you must allow, that one man, nay, that many men may live, be continued in the possession of life, *for the righteousness of another*. Or else you must do, what I am sure you abhor—you must charge, with absurdity and impossibility, even the declaration of JEHOVAH himself; *If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then will I spare all the place* FOR THEIR SAKES *.

Ther. Not all your refinements can reconcile me to this uncouth notion.—The practice is *unexampled*, and absolutely inconsistent with the rules of *distributive* justice.

Asp, Ah! my Theron, if we look for examples of GOD's unbounded goodness, amongst the puny proceedings of men; we shall be led into the most extravagant misapprehensions. To measure one of the sparks on your ring, and fancy we have taken dimensions of the Alps or the Andes, would be, in comparison of this error, a small mistake. Since, between a brilliant speck, and a range of mountains, there is *some* proportion: but between human beneficence,

* Gen. xviii, 26.

and this heavenly bounty, there cannot possibly be *any*,—However, the all-condescending CREATOR has been pleased, so to dispense his infinitely rich grace; that we may find, though nothing parallel in any, nothing correspondent in all circumstances; yet some *faint* shadow of its *manner*, among the affairs of mankind. Something, that perhaps may give us such an idea of the stupendous subject, as a *glow-worm* would give of the sun's splendor, in case a person has never beheld that magnificent luminary. —This remark I must intreat you to recollect, whenever I attempt to elucidate the mysteries of the gospel, by any occurrencies in common life.

When your worthy minister was disabled, by a rheumatic disorder, from attending on the business of his function, several of the neighbouring clergy gave him their assistance. Was he not, by this *vicarious* performance of his office, *entitled* to all the profits of his living?—It seems therefore not so unexampled a thing, for one person to act in another's stead. And when a service is thus discharged by the *proxy*, the benefit may, according to the received maxims of mankind, accrue to the *principal*.—Did not *Jehu's* descendents, even to the fourth generation *, reap the advantage of their great grandfather's zeal? Does not the Duke of * * * * enjoy the honors and rewards, won by the sword of a victorious ancestor?—And may not the whole world of believers, with equal, with far greater justice, receive life and salvation, on account of their all-deserving SAVIOUR? especially, since he and they are one mystical body; represented as such in Scripture, and considered as such by GOD.

No, say you: "this is contrary to the rules of distributive justice."—What is your idea of a *surety?* how was the affair stated, aad how were matters negociated, with relation to your generous acquaintance *Philander?* he, you know, was bound for an unfortunate brother, who lately stepped aside.

Ther. The debt, by his brother's absconding, devolved upon *Philander*. He was responsible for all, and obliged to pay the whole sum.

* 2 Kings, x. 30.

Asp. Was not his payment *as satisfactory* to the creditor, as if the money had been paid in the debtor's own person, by the debtor's own hand?

Ther. Certainly.

Asp. Was not the debtor, by this vicarious payment, released from all fear of prosecution, and *acquitted* from any future demand on this score?

Ther. He was.

Asp. Apply this instance to the redemption of sinners by JESUS CHRIST: who is, in the sacred writings, expressly styled A SURETY *.—If *Philander's* act was deemed in the estimation of law, the act of his brother; if the deed of the former was imputed, in point of advantage, entirely to the latter: why should not the same effects take place, with regard to the divine bondsman, and poor insolvent sinners? why should *that* be exploded in our system of divinity, which is invariably admitted in our courts of justice?

Ther. Obedience and righteousness are, in the nature of the things themselves, *personal qualities*, and *only* so. Every man is that only (and can be nothing else) which he is in himself.

Asp. Righteousness, as *dwelling in* us, is undoubtedly a personal quality. Obedience, as *performed by* us, comes under the same denomination. But does this supersede the necessity, or destroy the existence of imputed righteousness?—Your first proposition is ambigous. Let it speak distinctly; add *inherent* to your righteousness; and the sense becomes determinate, but the argument falls to the ground.

" Every man is that only (and can be nothing else) " which he is in himself."—If I had never seen the bible, I should have yielded my ready assent to this proposition. But, when I open the Old Testament, and find it written by the Prophet; *In the LORD shall all the house of Israel be justified* †. When I turn to the New Testament, and hear the Apostle saying; *ye are complete in HIM, who is head of all principalities and powers* ‡; I cannot concur with Theron, without contradicting Revelation.—*Israel*,

* Heb. vi. 22. † Isai. xlv. 25. ‡ Col. ii. 10.

or the true believer, is said to be justified; and the foundation of this blessing is declared to be, not in himself, but in the LORD. The *Colossians* are said to be complete; which, we are very certain, they were not in themselves; and are expressly assured, they were so in CHRIST.—Hence it appears, quite contrary to my friend's assertion, that sinners both have and are that in CHRIST, which they neither have nor are in themselves. They have, by imputation, *a righteousness* in CHRIST; they are, by this imputed righteousness, *complete* before GOD.

I believe, your mistake proceeds from neglecting to distinguish between *inherent* and *imputed.*—We never suppose; that a profane person is devout, or an intemperate person, sober. To live soberly and act devoutly, is *inherent* righteousness. But we maintain; that the profane and intemperate, being convinced of their iniquity, and betaking themselves to the all-sufficient SAVIOUR for redemption, are interested in the merit both of his life and his death. This is *imputed* righteousness.—We farther affirm; that though criminal in themselves, they are made righteous in CHRIST; and are accepted by GOD, for his beloved SON's sake. This is *justification* through imputed righteousness.

Neither is this a precarious or unwarrantable opinion, but the clear and positive declaration of Scripture. *He justifieth*, he absolves from guilt, he treats as righteous—*Whom?* upright, obedient, sinless creatures? this were nothing extraordinary- No; but *he justifieth the ungodly* *, *that believe* in the LORD JESUS. Imputing, as the ground of this justification, *their* trespasses to him, and *his* righteousness to them. This is divinely gracious indeed!

Ther. I see no occasion for such nice distinctions, and *metaphysical* subtilties, in plain popular divinity. Hard terms and abstruse notions, may perplex the head, but seldom improve the heart.

Asp. Why then do you oblige us to make use of them? If some people twist and entangle the reins, it behoves others to *clear* them of the embarrassment, and *replace*

* Rom vi. 5.

them in their due position. Many writers, either from an artful design, or through a strange inadvertence, have jumbled and confounded these two very different ideas. Hence, they have started objections to our doctrine, which, the moment you introduce this obvious distinction, vanish into air. They broach a mistake of their own, and then charge the absurdity upon others.

I am no more fond of hard terms, and abstruse notions, than my Theron. Neither can I think the instance before us, is so abstruse and intricate. I am very certain, you are capable of comprehending much higher and nicer refinements. Therefore, I must once again entreat you to remember the very material difference, between *inherent* and *imputed* righteousness. The former, is the essence of sanctification; the latter, is the ground of justification. By *this*, we are restored to the favor of GOD; by *that*, we are made meet for his heavenly kingdom.—Let this distinction, which is easy, which is scriptural, which is important, take place; and we may for the future dismiss, what you call, the metaphysical subtilties. Our disagreement will cease, and our opinions tally.

Ther. I question that, Aspasio. There are other difficulties to be got over, because I can digest so crude an opinion.—If we are justified by the righteousness of Christ, then the righteousness which justifies mankind, is *already* wrought out.

Asp. And this you take to be a notorious falshood.—Whereas, I look upon it, as a certain and most delightful truth.—The righteousness, which justifies sinful man, was *set on foot;* when GOD sent forth his SON from the habitation of his holiness and glory, to be born of a woman, and made subject to the law.—It was *carried on*, through the whole course of our SAVIOUR's life; in which he always did such things, as magnified the law, and were [illegible]easing to his heavenly FATHER.—It was *completed* at [illegible]t ever memorable, grand period of time, when the blessed IMMANUEL bowed his dying head; and cried, with a stro[illegible] triumphant voice, IT IS FINISHED.

[illegible] justifying righteousness was to be wrought by *our*-[illegible] we could never be truly and fully justified till death;

till our warfare is accomplished, and our *last* act of obedience exerted.—But how uncomfortable is such an apprehension! and how miserable it would render our lives!—How contrary is such a sentiment, to the determination of the apostle; *Ye* ARE *justified!** as well as to the experience of christians; *We* ARE *passed from death unto life!*†

Ther. Soothed then with this pleasing surmise, may not the *libertine* say to his soul?—"Soul take thine ease in the "most indolent security. All my carnal appetites, indulge "yourselves without restraint. Conscience, be under no "solicitude to live soberly, righteously, and godlily. For "the work *is done*; *all done* to my hands. I am like "some fortunate heir, whose parents have been successfully industrious; and have left nothing to exercise the "diligence of their surviving son, but only to possess the "inheritance, and live on labours not his own."

Asp. The libertine, who only speculates or disputes, may indeed abuse the *doctrine* of grace. But the believer, who is guided and influenced by the *power* of grace, will improve it to better purposes. Where the former only *fluctuates* on the understanding, such detestable consequences may ensue. Where the latter *operates* on the heart, it will always produce very different effects. Such a person, from such a faith, will never be inclined to inactivity or licentiousness. No more than our busy companions, with their humming notes, and honied thighs, are, by this bright sunshine and all these expanded blossoms, inclined to *sleep away* their hours in the hive. You may as soon expect to see these colonies of the spring, swarming in *December*, clinging to an icicle, or dispersing themselves to gather honey on the snow; as to see a truly gracious man, who *is dead to sin, living any longer therein.*‡—*GOD forbid!*§ He abhors the very thought.

Whoever, therefore, so shamefully *perver's* so sweet and glorious a doctrine, is a witness against himself, that he has

* 1 Cor. vi. 11. † 1 John v. 20. ‡ Rom. vi. 2.

§ Rom. vi. 1, 2.

neither lot nor portion in the inestimable privilege. Does an animal suck poison from the most wholesome herbs? We are sure, from that infallible indication, it is the vile spider, or some envenomed insect, not the valuable and industrious bee.

Ther. Truly, Aspasio, I know not how to call that doctrine sweet, much less can I recommend it as wholesome; which renders repentance, personal reformation, and inherent rectitude *needless*. And if your tenet is once received, all these duties may fairly be dismissed. So that if the thing was possible, yet it would be *pernicious*.

Asp. The Prophet was of another mind: *they shall look on him, whom they have pierced, and mourn.** Sinners shall look, by faith, to their crucified Lord: shall see him fastened with nails to the cursed tree; see him stabbed to the heart by the bloody spear. And *remembering*, that this was the punishment due to their provocations; *believing*, that by this punishment, they are freed from all penal sufferings, and entitled to all spiritual blessings: they shall not be tempted to transgress, but incited to mourn; not play the profligate but act the penitent. The Apostle exactly agrees with the Prophet; and both are diametrically opposite to my friend; the goodness, the transcendent and inconceivable goodness of GOD our SAVIOUR, instead of diverting from, *leadeth to repentance* †.

Far from obstructing, it powerfully promotes *personal reformation*. For thus saith that all-wise BEING, who intimately knows our frame, and discerns what is most effectual to work upon our minds; *The grace of GOD, which bringeth salvation, hath appeared; teaching us, that denying all ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godlily in this present evil world.*‡ Grace, you observe, even that gloriously free grace, which bringeth salvation to unworthy creatures, is a dissuasive of all vice, and an encouragement to every virtue.

As to *inherent rectitude*, how can that be rendered needless by imputed righteousness? Is health rendered insig-

* Zech. xii. 10. † Rom. ii. 4. ‡ Tit. ii. 11, 12.

nificant, by the abundance of our riches? Does ease become superfluous, through the beauty of our apparel?—Holiness is the *health* of our souls, and the *ease* of our minds. Whereas, ungovernable passions create keener anguish, than a brood of vipers gnawing our bosoms. Inordinate desires are a more intolerable nuisance, than swarms of locusts infesting our abodes. To regulate *those*, and to restrain *these*, can never be needless, till comfort and sorrow change their properties; till the diabolical nature becomes equally desirable with the divine.

Ther. The believer, indeed, out of mere generosity, *may*, if he please, add works of righteousness of his own. But his main interest is secure without them.

Asp. Rather, Theron, he *must* out of duty, he *will* out of gratitude, and from the new disposition of his nature, he *cannot* but, add to his faith, works of righteousness.

How runs the heavenly *edict*, in this case made and provided? *I will, that they who have believed in GOD*, for pardon of sin and life eternal, *be careful to maintain good works.**—How beats the *pulse* of a believing soul? You may feel it, in that truly generous demand, made by the psalmist: *What shall I render unto the LORD*, for delivering me from impending death, from deserved damnation; and *for all the benefits, that he hath done unto me?*† A grateful heart wants not the goad, but is a spur to itself.—How leans the *bias* of his nature? He is new-born; created in CHRIST JESUS unto good works;‡ his delight is in the law of the LORD.‖ Whatever is our supreme delight, we are sure to prosecute; and prosecute with ardour. *We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard*,§ was the profession of the apostles; if applied to practical godliness, it is the experience of the *christian.*

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* Tit. iii. 8. † Psal. cxvi. 12. ‡ Eph. ii. 10.
‖ Psal. i. 2.

§ *Cannot but.*—This is an expression, used by the apostles, Acts iv. 20. It describes the genuine and habitual propensity of their *new* nature. As the compassionate bowels cannot but yearn at spectacles of misery: as the benevolent heart cannot but dilate with pleasure, at the sight of a brother's happiness; so the new creature in *CHRIST*, cannot but *desire* to glorify, and *delight* to obey, the ever-blessed GOD.

Nor can his main interest be secure without a holy obedience. Because, the Judge of the world, at the day of eternal retribution, will declare to the workers of iniquity; *I never knew you; depart from me.** Because holiness, though not the cause of our admittance to the beatific vision; is so necessary a qualification, that *without it no man shall see the LORD.*† Without it, there is no access to heaven, neither could there be any enjoyment in heaven.

Ther. Pray, recollect yourself, Aspasio. According to the tenour of your own illustration, the necessity of *personal* obedience is evidently vacated. For, how can the law demand a debt of the principal which has been fully discharged by the surety? Does not such a doctrine supply consequences, very hurtful to piety and virtue?

Asp. The debt of penal suffering, and the debt of perfect obedience, are fully discharged by our divine SURETY. So that we are no longer under a necessity of obeying, in order to obtain an exemption from punishment, or to lay the foundation for our final acceptance. We are nevertheless engaged, by many other obligations, to walk in all dutiful and conscientious regard to the law.

The *Levites* were a type of CHRIST. *The Levites,* saith the holy One of *Israel, shall do the service of the congregation, and bear their iniquities.*‡—*Do the sacred service,* whereby the people were accepted before GOD—*Bear the several iniquities,* whereby they obtained remission of sins.—*Israel,* you see, by means of the *Levites* and their ministrations, were made partakers of pardon, of peace, and the divine favor. This is undeniable. But did this vacate the necessity of their personal obedience? Could this supply consequences very hurtful, or in any degree hurtful, to their piety and virtue?—Where then was the wisdom of the law-giver? What a reflection this, on the Author of such an institution? Either he could not be wise and holy, or else this charge must be false and groundless.

* Matt. vii. 23. † Heb. xii. 14. ‡ Numb. xviii. 23.

Ther. Many other obligations, you say. Instance in some, and demonstrate the charge to be groundless.

Asp. Obedience, personal obedience, is necessary, because—this is the most authentic proof of our love to the gracious REDEEMER; *If ye love me, keep my commandments,**—this is a comfortable evidence of our union with that exalted head; *He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit,*† this is also the most effectual method, of adorning our profession; and of winning our neighbours, to embrace the gospel. *Let your light,* the light of your exemplary conversation, not only appear, but *shine before men: that they, seeing your good works,* may think honorably of your religion.‡ *May glorify your FATHER, which is in heaven;* and say, with those proselytes mentioned by the prophet, *We will go with you.*

Are not these obligations?—Real obligations? Obligations, whose reality will never be disputed, whose force must always be felt, by the true believer.—*Do we then make void the law,* through an imputed righteousness? No, verily: but—if gratitude to the crucified JESUS, have any constraining influence; if a concern for our own comfort and happiness have any persuasive energy; if there be any thing inviting, any thing desirable, in the prospect of honoring GOD, and edifying man—*we establish the law.* By all these generous, manly, endearing motives, we enforce its precepts, and provide for its observance.

Ther. Should we admit this doctrine, mankind could no longer be considered as in themselves, and solely in themselves *accountable* creatures. Nor would the future judgment be an *equitable* distribution of rewards and punishments; but only GOD's awful and uncontroulable execution of his own arbitrary and irreversible decrees.

Asp. I have never been accustomed to consider mankind, under the gospel dispensation, as accountable *solely* in themselves. Because, in this comfortable and benign scheme, a MEDIATOR intervenes; undertakes to answer for his people; and bears the *chastisement of their peace.*—

* John xiv. 15. † John xv. 5. ‡ Matt. v. 16.

Were we accountable solely in ourselves, CHRIST as our great HIGH-PRIEST, would be set aside; and his sacrifice, as a propitiation for sin, be of none effect.

Why may not the future judgment, be an equitable distribution of rewards and punishments? If those, who reject the atonement of the dying JESUS, and refuse to depend on his consummate righteousness, are left to stand or fall, according to the issue of their own obedience. If believers, on the other hand, are accepted through their most meritorious REDEEMER; but rewarded with higher or inferior degrees of felicity, in proportion to the sanctity of their nature, and usefulness of their lives—I, see nothing arbitrary in this procedure; but an admirable mixture of just severity, and free goodness—on those, who reject the atonement, *just severity*—to those, who rely on their SAVIOUR, *free goodness*.

Ther. The obedience of CHRIST was *wholly* due for himself; and therefore could not merit for another.

Asp. A bold assertion this! Whoever can make it good, will infallibly overthrow my opinion; and absolutely destroy my hopes. But surely, Theron, it is not your real sentiment.

Could it then be matter of duty in the eternal SON, to be born of a woman; and in the LORD of lords, to become the servant of all? Could it be matter of duty in the KING of Glory, to embrace the infamy of the cross; and in the PRINCE of Life, to pour out his soul unto death?—If all this was matter of duty, the ever-blessed JESUS (how shall I speak it? who can believe it?) was no better than an *unprofitable* servant.* For, such is the acknowledged character of One, who does no more, than—

Ther. Not so fast, nor quite so vehement, my friend. Remember what the scripture affirms. CHRIST is there said to receive a *commandment*, and be *subject* to the law. Both which expressions imply obligation and duty.

Asp. In order to accomplish our redemption, the SON of GOD submitted himself to the commandment. But

* Luke xvii. 10

this was his own *spontaneous* act. The matter of his *free* choice. To which he lay under no obligation, till he engaged to become our surety.

Being in the form of GOD, he was Lord of the law; and no more subject to its commands, than obnoxious to its curse. Nevertheless, *he took upon him the form of a servant*; and *was made under the law*.—Wherefore? because it was his bounden duty, to put his neck under the yoke*? impossible to imagine!—Or, that *he might* obtain everlasting life and glory for himself? no such thing. But that he might *redeem those who were under the law* †. From which it appears, that both his engagement and obedience were, not for himself, but for his people.—Therefore the Prophet cries out. with holy exultation; *to us a child is born; to us a son is given* ‡! his incarnate state and human nature, together with all that he did and suffered in both, were for us: *those* assumed on our account, *these* referred to our advantage.

Let us consider this, and be amazed! and be charmed! —The great universal LORD vouchsafes to pay universal obedience! what *condescension* was here!—he vouchsafes to pay it, for us men, and for our redemption! what *goodness* was this!

Ther. Before we indulge the devotional strain, we should take care that our devotion is founded on *rational* principles. Otherwise it may prove, not like the fire on the altar, which was *always burning and never went out*; like the flash of a sky-rocket, which glitters one moment, and is extinguished the next.—Suppose I should say; all this obedience was necessary in CHRIST, as a *qualifying condition* for the Priestly office; and in order to confer merit, on the sacrifice of his death.

Asp. This you are welcome to say. But I hope, you will not, like a certain acquaintance of ours, be determined never to unsay or retract, what you have once affirmed.—You will please to remember, that there was no need of any such qualifying condition: the dignity of our LORD's

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* Acts xv. 10. † Gal. iv. 5 ‡ Isai. ix. 6.

person being, of itself, sufficient to render his sacrifice infinitely satisfactory, and infinitely meritorious.

Hence it will appear, that for every thing advanced upon this subject, we have a solid foundation, in reason, as well as in Scripture.—Scripture teaches us, that the man CHRIST JESUS, was united to the second person of the eternal TRINITY.—Reason assures us, that, by virtue of this union, he must have an unquestionable right to everlasting life and glory. If so, he could be under no necessity of obeying, in order to procure either honor or happiness for himself.—Therefore, all that he performed, in conformity to the preceptive part of the law, he performed under the character of a *public person*; in the place, and for the benefit of his spiritual seed. That they might be interested in it, and justified by it,

Ther. Be it so: the believer is interested in CHRIST's righteousness—Pray, is he interested in all, or only in part?—If in all, then every believer is equally righteous, and equally to be rewarded. Which is contrary to an allowed maxim, that there will be different allotments of happiness in the heavenly world.—If in part only, how will you ascertain the degree? what proportion belongs to this person, and what to the other?—Either way, your scheme is inextricably embarrassed.

Asp. The reply to my Theron's enquiry, is easy; and the embarrassment he mentions, is but imaginary.—Every true believer is interested in CHRIST's righteousness; in the *whole merit* of his spotless nature, of his perfect obedience, and expiatory death. " Is CHRIST *divided?* said a holy " person in his last moments. No; I have the whole of " his righteousness. All that *he* did, all that he suffered " for the redemption of sinners is mine."

You are a great admirer of anatomy, Theron, and must undoubtedly remember the very peculiar structure of the *ear*. Other parts of the body are progressive in their growth. Their bulk is proportioned to the infantile, or manly age. But the organs of hearing, I have been informed, are *precisely* of the same size, in the feeble infant, and the confirmed adult.—Justification likewise, being absolutely necessary to a state of acceptance with GOD, is, in

every stage of the Christian course, and even in the first dawn of sincere faith, complete. With regard to the existence of the griailege, there is no difference in the babes, the young men, the fathers in CHRIST. The *perception*, the *assurance*, the comfortable *enjoyment* of the benefit, may increase. But the benefit itself is incapable of augmentation.

The various advances in sanctification, account for the *various degrees* of future glory. Not account for them only, but render them entirely reasonable; and, according to our apprehension of things unavoidable. Even as they seem perfectly agreeable, to the representations of the gospel.*—As to settling the *proportion*, we may safely leave that to the Supreme ARBITRATOR. He, who *meteth out the heavens with a span*, and *setteth a compass upon the face of the deep*, cannot be at a loss to adjust this particular.

Ther. The organs of hearing, though not precisely, are *nearly*, of the same bulk, in the babe and the man. They acquire, from advancing years, scarce any thing more than an increase of solidity. So that I make no objection to your illustration, but only to your doctrine.

If CHRIST has done all, and we are entitled to his whole merits only by believing; to be saved, must be the *easiest* thing in the world. Whereas, the bible represents christianity, as a *race* and a *warfare*, a state of conflict and a course of striving.—In good truth, Aspasio, you prophesy pleasing things. Divinity is not your profession; or else, I should number you among "the smooth, emollient, "downy doctors." For according to the articles of your creed, there is no more difficulty in acquiring heaven and salvation, than in rising from our seat.

Asp. If we consider the enjoyment of heaven, in a legal view; if we regard it, as an *acquisition* to be made by ourselves; it will then be, I say not extremely difficult, but absolutely impossible. Whereas, if we consider it in the

* See Dan. xii. 3. 1 Cor. iii. 8. 2 Cor. ix. 6. Luke xix. 12, 13, &c. Where the servant, that gained five pounds, is made ruler over five cities; while another, who acquired double the sum, is promoted to double honor.

evangelical light; if we regard it, as the *gift* of GOD; it is then attended with no other difficulty, than that which consists in believing the report, and receiving the grace of the gospel.—*To believe*, is certainly a most easy thing in itself; and would be equally easy to us, were not our minds darkened and enfeebled by the corruption of nature, assaulted and embarrassed by the temptations of satan.* On account of these impediments, we often find the duty of believing accompanied with difficulties; with many and great difficulties; such as will abundantly justify the language of the apostle, when he speaks of *fighting the good fight*,† *and running the race*‡ *of faith.*

A sinner, seeking for heaven and salvation, I would not compare to an active gentleman rising from his seat; but rather to a *ship-wrecked* mariner, labouring to gain some place of safety.—He espies a large *rock*, which rears its head above the boisterous flood. To this he bears away, and to this he approaches: but, whirling winds, and dashing waves, drive him back to an unhappy distance.—Exerting all his strength, he advances nearer still; and attempts to climb the desirable eminence. When, a sweeping surge interposes, and drenches him in the rolling deep.—By determined efforts, he recovers the space he had lost. Now, he fastens on the cliff, and has almost escaped the danger. But, there is such a numbness in his limbs, that he cannot maintain his hold; and such an impetuous swell in the ocean, that he is once more dislodged, and plunged afresh into the raging billows.—What can he do? his life, his precious life, is at stake. He must renew, still renew, and never intermit his endeavours.—Neither let him abandon himself to despair. The MASTER sees him, amidst all his fruitless toil. Let him cry earnestly; *Lord, save me! I perish!* And HE, who commandeth the winds and the waves, will put forth his beneficent hand; will rescue him from the devouring sea; and set his feet upon the rock. Enabling him *to believe, to the salvation of his soul.*

* See Marshall's Gospel-Mystery of Sanctification. Edit. 6, page 203, &c.
† 1 Tim. vi. 12. ‡ Heb. xii. 1, 2.

Such, my friend, so *painful*, so *assiduous*, are frequently the conflicts of an awakened sinner; before it is given him* to rest, in peaceful security, on the *Rock of Ages*, *CHRIST JESUS*. Of this you may, some time or other, be assured, not only from my lips, but from your own experience.

Ther. What may happen in some future period of time, is beyond my power to foresee. At present, I am apt to think, we must put a stop to the theological lecture. Don't you remember our engagement with *Altinous?* And you will own, that punctuality in performing our promises, is at least a *moral* virtue, if it be not a *christian* grace.

* Phil. i. 29.





DILOGUE VI.

ASPASIO's affairs called him to *London*. He staid in town a few days. But as soon as business was finished, he quitted the city, and hastened to his friend's *country-seat*.—Upon his arrival, he found some agreeable company, who came on purpose to spend an evening with the family. This incident, gave a respite from controversy, and prevented the immediate prosecution of their debate.—As the next morning proved misty, and unfit for walking abroad, Theron invited Aspasio to pass an hour in his study.

It was situate at the extremity of a large gallery: which, while it conducted the feet to a repository of learning, interposed between the ear, and all the disturbance of domestic affairs. So that you are accommodated with every thing, that may *regale* a studious mind; and incommoded with nothing, that may *interrupt* a sedate attention.—Aspasio readily consented to the proposal; but desired, first, to take a turn in this beautiful *oblong*, and divert himself with the decorations of the place.

Asp. A very short survey, Theron, is sufficient to discover the correctness of your judgment, and the true delicacy of your taste.—Here, are no *impertinent* and *frivolous* exhibitions, of romantic tales, or poetic stories. Here, are no *indecent* pieces of imagery, that tend to corrupt a chaste, or inflame a wanton fancy.—On the contrary, I am pre-

sented with a collection of maps, accurately drawn by the most able hands; and with several remarkable transactions of antiquity, most eloquently told in the language of the pencil.—You have happily hit that grand point, which the gentleman of refinement, as well as the author of genius, should ever keep in his view—the union of the *beneficial* with the *delightful.*

Ther. Indeed, my Aspasio, I have often been disappointed, sometimes even shocked, in the gardens, the porticos, and the walks of some modern *virtuosi.* Their portraits and statues are little else, but an assemblage of elaborate trifles. *Ixion* stretched upon the wheel, or *Phaeton* precipitated from the chariot. *Apollo* stringing his lyre, or *Jupiter* (I beg his supreme highness's pardon, for not giving him the precedence in my catalogue) bestriding his eagle and balancing his bolts.—Pray, where is the advantage of being introduced to this *fabulous* tribe of gentry? What noble idea can they awaken, or what valuable impression leave upon the mind? The best we can say of such performances, is, that they are limning and sculpture expensively thrown away.

This celebrated trumpery, one can bear with, however. But, when the painting and sculpture, instead of cultivating virtue, and improving our morals, are calculated to be the very *bane* of both—will you call *this* an elegant entertainment? No: 'tis a nuisance. 'Tis a pest.—In the *statues,* I grant, every dimple sinks, and every muscle swells, with the exactest propriety. The countenance is animated with life, and the limbs are ready to start into motion.—The *picture,* I am sensible, is as highly finished as the effigy. The distributions of light and shade most artfully adjusted. The diminutions of the perspective true to a nicety. Nor can any thing exceed the easy flow of the robe, unless it be the graceful attitude, and almost speaking aspect, of the principal figure.—But, is this *masterly* execution an equivalent for the most *malignant* effects? For sullying the purity of my fancy, and poisoning the powers of my imagination?

It is an indication of the owner's *judicious* taste, to prefer regularity of features in the hammered block, before or-

derly and harmonious affections in his own breast? Does it bespeak a *refined* disposition, or a *benevolent* temper, to be so extravagantly enamoured with the touches of a lascivious pencil; as to expose them in the most frequented passages, and obtrude them on every unwary guest?—Surely, this can create no very advantageous opinion of a gentleman's *intellectual* discernment. Much less can it raise an amiable idea of his *moral* character. On such occasions, I am strongly tempted to suspect, that real honor is a stranger, where common decency is wanting.

As for the artist, one can hardly forbear execrating his hateful folly, who could *prostitute* such fine talents to such infamous purposes.—Detested be the chizzel! that teaches, though with inimitable dexterity, the cold obdurate marble to enkindle dissolute affections.—Abhorred be the pencil! that makes no other use of the most lovely colours, than to pollute the canvass, and ensnare the spectator.

It is argued, I know, that many of those pieces are the completest models extant.—An *everlasting reproach* this to the art: but no apology for the performances. Since, the more nicely, they are executed, the more mischievous is their influence. It strikes the surer, and sinks the deeper. It dresses destruction gay, and paves with beauty the way to ruin.

It is my chief ambition, Aspasio, to have all my decorations so circumstanced, that the beholder may learn some *valuable precept* in morality, or be reminded of some *important event* in history: may find, even in the scenes of his amusement, something to establish his virtue, or enlarge his knowledge.

I frequently entertain the eldest son, who is reading the *Greek* and *Latin* historians, with an explanation of my principal drawings. That he may behold in colouring, what he has perused in narrative.—At this instant, the youth happened to make his appearance; paying his respects to Aspasio, and dutifully saluting his father.—It just recurs to my memory, said Theron, that some necessary affairs of the family, require my attendance for a few minutes. Will you excuse my absence, good Aspasio, and permit my son to supply my place?

You will very much oblige me, by leaving me such a companion.—Come, my dear sir, addressing himself to Eugenio; as I know you are a lover of learning, what think you of diverting ourselves with these agreeable books? which give us their instructive lessons, not in puzzling languages, but in pleasing colours.—*Eugenio* spoke his consent, and expressed his modesty in a becoming blush.—While Aspasio proceeded—

Asp. This is a striking picture indeed! hills piled on hills form a most astonishing prospect. What *horrible magnificence* reigns amidst those rocks and snows! Nature seems to have designed them for the boundaries of the world. Yet those daring troops are attempting to burst the prodigious barrier. Who are they, Eugenio, and whom shall we call their leader?

Eug. This, sir, is the famous *Hannibal*, heading and encouraging his army, in the passage of the *Alps*. The sons of *Africa* seem to shiver with cold, as they traverse those frozen regions, and march among the clouds.

Asp. 'Tis the very same. Some, you observe, climb, with excessive toil, the steep and craggy cliffs. Others, with far greater difficulty, descend through dreadful declivities of ice; exposed all the while, to the arrows of the mountaineers.—Some, endeavouring to avoid the showers of steel, slip with their feet, and tumble headlong down the vast projecting promontories. See! from what a height they are falling! carriages and their drivers, the horse and his rider! and at what a distance still, from the stony abyss below! some lie, with close eyelids, and ghastly features dashed to death at the bottom. Others, writhing with the torture of mangled limbs, and broken bones, lift up an agonizing look to their comrades.—Their comrades, insensible of a brother's misery, and wholly intent upon their own security, hang in frightful elevation on the very edges of the precipice. The precipice seems to totter, as they cling; and the alarmed spectator expects, every moment, a hideous downfall.—Are you not startled at the view, Eugenio, and in pain for the hardy adventurers?

Eug. I am, sir. And I wonder, how they will extricate themselves from these perilous circumstances. I have read

in *Livy*, that they cut their way through the rocks, after they had softened them with *vinegar*. But is this probable? Be the fluid ever so corroding, how could they procure a sufficient quantity of it, amidst those desolate mountains?

Asp. I believe, their *resolution* and their *perseverance*, were the vinegar. These open a road through rocks; these under the conduct of prudence, and the favor of Heaven, surmount all obstacles. Influenced by these, the survivors press boldly on? and are determined to vanquish the horrors of nature as a prelude to their victory over the forces of *Rome*. Let these, resolution and perseverance I mean, be the companions of my *Eugenio's* youthful studies, and they will enable him also to conquer difficulties—even all the difficulties, which lie in his way to learning.

What is our next draught? at each end we have a group of living figures. All the intermediate space is an extensive tract of land, diversified only by rapid rivers, horrid desarts, and mountainous ridges; with here and there a few savage natives, in uncouth dresses, and formidable arms.—It is more like a *map* than a *picture*. And the most remarkable beauty is, the *ærial perspective*. Which puts a very agreeable cheat upon our eyes; causing us to behold, on an ell of canvass, the space of many hundreds of miles.

Eug. This represents *the retreat of ten thousand* Greeks. First we behold them in the plains of *Media;* at an immense distance from their native country; without guides; without provision; and, what is the most desperate calamity of all, deprived of their ablest officers by treachery and murder.—Well may they look dejected. How have I pitied their case, as I read their story! abhorred the perfidy of their enemies, and wished them all success in their hazardous enterprize!

Asp. Don't you perceive, their drooping spirits begin to revive, and some gleam of hope diffuses itself through their countenances, while they listen to the eloquent *Xenophon?* who stands conspicuous in the mist, haranguing his soldiers, and rousing their courage. But, ah! what a vast extent of unknown climes must they traverse, with a numerous and victorious army, harassing them in flank, or hanging upon their rear! what fatigues must they sustain,

what hardships endure, before they arrive at their wished-for home!—*Home!* fired by the enchanting name, and animated by their brave philosopic leader, they resolve to push their way through all the extremes of peril and of pain. To scatter, with thetr little band, the encircling millions of *Barbarians*, is the smallest of their atchievements. They cross rivers, they scale rocks, whose slippery banks, and craggy summits, are lined with opposing nations. They wade through desarts of snow; and pass over inhospitable mountains, the far more dreadful abodes of *desolation, drought* and *famine*. They encounter the keenness of the northern storm, and all the rigour of the most malignant seasons.—As some of these articles are incapable of being expressed by the pencil, the artist remits us to the historian; and his contented himself, with markiug out the most distinguished stages of this memorable expedition. Only we view the courageous itinerants, once again, on a pretty lofty eminence. There they appear, not with their former dejection, but in all the transports of joy.

Eug. This, sir, is the mountain *Tecqua*. From whence they had the first view of the sea, and the first dawn of safety. There they embrace one another, and extol their commanders, especially the noble *Xenophon*. Whose history, filled with great exploits and extraordinary events, turns my task into a pleasure: and his manly yet benign aspect, strangely attracts my esteem. Methinks under such a general, I could have been willing to take my share, in all the toil, and all the hazards of the expedition.

Asp. Would my *Eugenio?* then I will list him under a captain, unspeakably more accomplished and beneficent. Young as you are, you shall, from this hour, commence a soldier and a traveller. A *soldier*, to fight against sin, and every temptation. A *traveller*, to pass through the wilderness of this world, unto the land of everlasting rest.—Though your enemies may be numerous, and your journey tedious, yet faint not, neither be discouraged. The LORD of heaven is your protector and guide; heaven itself shall be your exceeding great reward. When you arrive at those happy abodes, your delight will infinitely surpass, all that the *Grecians* felt on *Tecqua;* when their ravished eyes be-

held, and their tongues with extasy shouted, *The Sea! The Sea!*

The scene of yonder picture, I would venture to affirm, lies amongst the ancient *Jews*.

Eug. How can you tell this, Sir, at such distance?

Asp. By *the fringes in the borders of their garments, and on each figure a ribband of blue*.—GOD Almighty commanded all the *Jews*, to observe this peculiarity in their habit. That, their very clothes, being different from the apparel of the *Heathen* neighbours, might admonish both the wearers and beholders, not to be conformed to idolatrous worship, and licentious manners.—This, as well as every other divine command, our LORD JESUS CHRIST most exactly obeyed. Therefore, we are told by the evangelical historian, that the diseased woman, *who touched but the hem of his garment, was restored to health*. *Hem* it is in our *English* bibles. But, if you consult that most excellent of all books, the *Greek* testament; You will find, that the original world might more properly be rendered *Fringe*.* However, let us pass from the drapery to the design.

Eug. Here, we see David in one of the most threatening exigencies of his whole life. *Saul*; more like a blood hound than a king, pursues the pest of suns, and the most valuable of subjects. He has extended the wings of his very superior army, in order to surround † the injured hero, and his handful of associates.

Asp. This is the most animated, and I think, the most *masterly* performance, that has hitherto come under our notice.—Consternation and doubt agitate their looks. Shall they surrender themselves, as so many tame victims, to a tyrant's fury? or, shall they cut their way to safety through the hearts of countrymen, friends, and brothers? dreadful

* Matt. ix. 20.

† To this, or some such incident, may be applied a passage of the Psalms, which, in our translation, is very obscure; has scarce any sense, or if any, a very unjustifiable one. Wherefore should I fear in the days of evil, when the wickedness of my heels compasseth me round about? Psalm xlix. 5.

dilemma!—While they are debating, the pursuers are closing upon them. A few, a few minutes more, must decide their fate.

Eug. I have sometimes wondered, that the good and gracious GOD, should suffer his chosen servant to be brought into such imminent peril. Especially, as infinite wisdom, and Almighty power, could so easily have prevented it.

Asp. So then it is a custom with you, to *consider* what you read. You endeavour to discern the propriety of scripture, and enter into its design. In this I cannot but commend you; because, in this you follow the most illustrious example. You imitate the blessed JESUS. Who, about your time of life, *was found among the doctors*; *both hearing them*, with diligent attention, while they expounded the scripture; *and*, when the point was not fully illustrated, *asking them questions** for his further information.—Go on, sir, to examine what you peruse; to enquire, where you do not understand; and, if you think proper to make me your casuist, when any difficulty occurs, you will do me an honor, and give me a pleasure.

As to the case before us—GOD Almighty may suffer his chosen servants to be brought into the most imminent peril, for these, among other reasons. That the blessing of deliverance may be doubly *welcome*, and the power of delivering more signally *conspicuous*.—It is, I acknowledge, a maxim with men, to crush the cockatrice in the egg.—because, when grown into a serpent, it may not be easy, perhaps not be possible, to destroy or controul the venomous beast. But the omnipotent RULER often takes the contrary method. He permits danger to arrive at the very height. Matters are reduced even to a hopeless extremity. *Then* he makes bare his holy arm. *Then* he sends help from his sanctuary. To let all men see; that salvation, both temporal and eternal, is of the LORD; that no case is irremediable, and nothing impossible with GOD.

The ruin of these people seems indeed to be inevitable.—But who is the person that intervenes, just at this critical juncture?

* Luke ii. 46

Eug. It is a messenger from the principal inhabitants of *Judea.* He comes breathless and trembling. Amazement in his face, and dust upon his head. "An invasion!" he cries—"An invasion!—The Philistines have poured them-"selves upon our frontiers!—The Philistines are over-run-"ning the land!"*

Asp. Upon the receipt of this news, see! what vexation reddens in the disappointed Monarch's aspect! what anger lightens in his eye! at the same time, what pale reflections on his country's danger, mingle themselves with the fiery passions, and almost quench the flame enkindling in his cheeks.—Shall the vulture relinquish his prey, even when it lies fluttering under his talons? Galling thought! but his kingdom is at stake. If he does not immediately advance to repel the enemy, his all is lost. Burning therefore with indignation, yet chilled with fear, he turns, hasty though reluctant, away.– Are you not charmed, *Eugenio,* with this display of *tumultuous* and *contrary* passions? which afford the finest subject for historic painting, and are so happily expressed in this piece.

Eug. Indeed, sir, I am *shocked,* rather than charmed. The very looks of that revengeful monarch fill me with horror. What must he suffer in his mind, who discovers such rage and anguish in his features! I would not have his furious temper, for all his royal power.

Asp. Then, my dear *Eugenio,* you must endeavour to suppress every emotion of envy and malevolence. You must cherish a cordial good-will to all men; and learn to rejoice in their excellencies and happiness, as well as in *your own.* Envy is the worm that knaws, envy is the fury that embroils, his wretched heart. And an author, with whom you will ere long be acquainted, has assured us;

> Invidiâ Siculi non invenere Tyranni
> Tormentum majus.————Hor.

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* This event is related, 1 Sam. xxiii. 26, &c. And it is one of the most extraordinary instances of a divine interposition, at the very [illegible], that any history has recorded.

The next is a kind of *Night-piece.* Stars are in the sky, and the new moon rides on the skirts of the hemisphere. Which affords just light enough to distinguish objects.—This is a perfect contrast to the foregoing. We see no conflict of jarring passions; no fierce gesture, or mad demeanour. But the principal person appears *sedate* and *composed,* as the night that surrounds him. He stands on the bank of a river, thoughtful and attentive; as though he was pondering, or executing, some important project.

Eug. This is *Cyrus the Great.* He stands upon the banks of the *Euphrates;* not far from *Babylon.* He points with his sceptre, and is giving directions to his army. The directions are, to pass through the channel of the river (which is drained * of its water) in order to surprise the city.

Asp. This is a Prince of very superior dignity. The honored instrument of accomplishing JEHOVAH's counsels. He was foretold by the Prophet *Isaih.* He was even mentioned by name †, more than two hundred years before his birth. Let us wish him prosperity. For he goes to humble the pride of *Babylon,* and release the captivity of *Israel,*—See! The *Euphrates,* turned aside into the drains, discovers its immense bed. With what regular movements, and what calm alacity, the troops advance. Silence seems to escort them; while under covert of the shades, and with Providence at their head, they march along a road never before trodden by the foot of man.—The soldiers of the garrison, have abandoned their station on the wall, to join in the dissolute indulgence of this fatal night. The inhabitants, like many a heedless sinner, are lulled in indolence, and dreaming of pleasures, even on the very brink of ruin.

Eug. Why are those brazen gates, which lead to the river, placed in such a distinguished point of view? they strike my eye more, I think, than all the monuments of art and grandeur, which adorn the superb city.—And let me

* I will dry up thy rivers. Isai. xliv. 27.

† Isai. xliv. 28. xlv. 1.

farther ask; whether the painter has not offended against probability, in suffering them to stand wide open? on the approach of so formidable an adversary, I should expect to have found them shut with all possible security.

Asp. In this particular, the painter has shewed his judgment, and not forgotten his piety. GOD had devoted that haughty and oppressive metropolis to destruction. You will perceive, from this circumstance, how wonderfully he *over-rules* all events, for the accomplishment of his sacred purposes. Had those ponderous gates been shut,* the city had continued impregnable, and the whole enterprize been defeated. But, through some accidental forgetfulness, occasioned by the disorders of this riotous solemnity, or rather by a very *signal interposition* of divine vengeance, they are left open,† and afford an easy entrance to slaughter and death. Which rush upon the unhappy creatures, all sunk in sleep, or overcharged with wine; as a concealed snare, in some dreadful unexpected moment, springs up, and inextricably entangles the unwary bird.‡ Was I to inscribe this picture with a motto, I would choose the Apostles admonition; BE SOBER: BE VIGILANT.

Who is this, with his length of hair flowing upon his shoulders; with such amplitude of personage, such magnificence of mien, and noble plainness of habit?

Eug. This is my favourite piece.—My father sometimes shews me the heads of the philosophers. But there is something so gloomy and severe, in *Diogenes* and *Epictus*, that I could never much admire them. But this, Sir, is *Scipio;* the thunderbolt of war, as *Virgil* calls him. Here is something so sprightly and engaging, as well as grand as majestic, that I am never weary of looking on him.

* See this very momentous, though seemingly inconsiderable circumstance, finely illustrated by Mr. *Rollin*, and compared with a remarkable prophecy in Isaiah. Antient Hist. Vol. II. p. 144, 153.

† The gates shall not be shut. Isai. xlv. 1.

‡ How exactly does this catastrophe agree with the prophecy! I have laid a snare for thee, and thou art also taken, O Babylon, and thou wast not aware. Jer. l. 24.

Asp, He appears with a Lady of distinguished beauty in his hand.

Eug. This is the captive Princess; who had been taken in war: who was set apart for the General's prize; but whom he is now restoring to her espoused husband.

Asp. You are right, Eugenio.—He has just led in his lovely captive, attended by her husband and parents, amidst a full assembly of *Romans* and *Celtiberians*; the victors and the vanquished. His modest eyes, you observe, are are rather turned from, than gazing upon, the blooming virgin.—Cannot you suppose, how the spectators must be affected, upon the opening of this extraordinary scene? every one beholds, the hero with admiration, the lady with delight. Every bosom is big with expectation, or in pain for the event. After a short pause, he addresses himself to the lover, in words to this effect—" I am no stranger to " your interest in this fine woman. The fortune of war " has put her entirely into my power. The circumstances " of my youth cannot render me insensible to so engaging " a person. But with us *Romans*, honor and generosity " have a more prevailing influence, than trantitory gratifi- " cations. Take your bride; be happy in each other; and " when you look upon this gift, admire the *Romans*, be a " friend to *Rome*."—Upon this he delivers her (as the action is here represented) to the enamoured Prince

See! how the crouds, that cluster and hang around, are struck with the beneficent deed!— In the *Celtiberians*, we behold a mixture of veneration and surprise. Their looks are full of meaning. Methinks they are going to cry out; *excellent man!* —In the *Romans*, we discern a conscious superiority, and exultation of mind. Triumph is in their features. They say, or seem to say; *wondrous man is ours!* —In the *lady*, we admire the accomplished and modest fair; uniting all the dignity of her birth with all the delicacy of her sex. What soft confusion, and what tender joy, appear in her countenance! she is lost in wonder, and at a loss for words. She speaks the acknowledgements of her heart, by the silent eloquence of a tear; which steals down her glowing cheeks, to bedew the kind hand, that has protected her innocence, and is resigning her to her Lord.—*her Lord*

is under an apparent, and a graceful struggle, of love and gratitude. He dotes upon his charming Princess, and he almost adores his generous benefactor. We can hardly tell whether he is going to clasp the former in his arms, or throw himself at the feet of the latter.—The *aged parents* express their transport in a different manner. Their knees are bent to the earth; their eyes are lifted up to heaven; they implore, for their honored guardian, every blessing which the Gods can bestow.—*Scipio* himself displays all the magnanimity of the conqueror, tempered with the sedateness of the Philosopher, and softened with the gentleness of the friend. He gives happiness, but he enjoys a greater. His eyes sparkle with a sublime delight; and he seems to anticipate the applause, which this truly heroic act will gain, in all countries, and in all ages.

Eug. Is not this a greater victory, than any he had won, in the field of battle? and a nobler triumph, than any that could be voted him, by the applauding Senate? amiable *Scipio!* might I be a *Roman*, I would be no other than *Scipio*.

Asp. I wish you, my dear Sir, the temperance and generosity of *Scipio*. May you exercise them both; but from a better motive than his. *He*, I fear, was too much swaped by a spirit of ambition; which *you* must, not cherish, but endeavour to suppress.—A spirit of *ambition*, which pants after distinction, and thirsts for applause, is diametrically opposite to the genius of the gospel *.—It is a lesson, which must infallibly be unlearned if ever we become possessors of faith, or partakers of CHRIST †—It is a root of bitterness, which naturally produces envy ‡; that most odious, and (as you have just now seen) most self-tormenting of all tempers.—It is a habit of mind, which generally renders men incendiaries in the church, and disturbers of its tranquility ‖.—It is therefore more like an enchanted potion which inebriates, than a genuine cordial which animates.

* Gal v 26. John vii. 18. † John v. 44

‡ Gal v 26. ‖ 3 John, ix 11.

Eug. From what motive then would you encourage me lo be different in the pursuit of learning, and in the cultivation of every virtue!

Asp. Not, that you may acquire the poor, contemptible, perishing honor, which cometh from men—but, that you may *please* GOD, your almighty CREATOR—that you may *glorify CHRIST*, your infinitely condescending REDEEMER—and may be qualified to promote the *best interests* of your fellow-creatures—even their present holiness, and their eternal happiness.

These are the grand and endearing encouragements which our holy religion proposes. These will operate, I am bold to aver, with a much sweeter and a far more sovereign efficacy, than all the glittering enticements which *ambition* can devise; or all the delusory attractives, which *emulation*, the sister syren, can suggest. And, what is above every other consideration weighty, these motives will be more likely, or rather these will be very certain, to receive the *divine* blessing.

You told me, you was never weary of contemplating *Scipia*. For which reason, I promise myself, you will not be fatigued or displeased, though I have so long confined your attention to this pourtrait.—But have we no hero of *Britain*, fit to join this illustrious triumvirate from *Rome*, *Persia*, and *Judea?*

Eug. The very next we meet, is one of our *English* kings. But I cannot say, that I remember either his name, or his story.

Asp. How my young gentleman! do you read the annals of *other* nations, and not acquaint yourself with the affairs of *your own* country?—If I was in your place, I would apply myself to the classical writers by way of study, and to some valuable *English* historian by way of amusement. Such an amusement is infinitely preferable to *novels* or *romances;* and will not only relax your attention, but enrich your mind.

Eug. I thank you, good Sir, for your admonition. If you please, I will now begin the study, you recommend. Your explanation of these drawings, shall be the rudiments of my knowledge. And I shall think it a happiness, to receive my first instructions, from so able a master.

Asp. It is honor enough for *me*, *Eugenio*, to have given you the hint. I pretend to nothing more, than to point out your game, or to spring the covey. You shall be taught, by a more expert proficient, to make it your own. Yet though others may direct you with greater skill, none will rejoice in your successful pursuit, more sincerely than myself.

This is our renowned *Henry the fifth*; as he appeared after the victory of *Agincourt*. You see the gallant conqueror in steel, and recent from the slaughter of the insulting foe. He seems to breathe an heroic ardour, which is irradiated and exalted by a lively devotion. If *Courage* can be expressed by the pencil, this is the genuine likeness: keen, yet composed; grasping the sword, yet looking up to heaven.—He that, a little while ago, drove the battle, like a whirlwind,* on the legions of *France*; now, bends a suppliant knee, and offers the eucharistic hymn, to the LORD GOD of hosts. No turbulent or disorderly joy riots among the soldiery. They express not the triumph of their hearts, in frantic exultations, or drunken revels; but in acts of thanksgiving to JEHOVAH. In an attitude, which speaks the devout acknowledgment of the prophet, *Thou art our battle-ax and weapons of war*;† or the grateful declaration of the psalmist, *Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto* THY *name be the glory* ‡

This last instance informs my *Eugenio*, that prayer and praise are an honorable employ—have been practised by persons of the most admired endowments—are the surest method of *obtaining success*, in whatever business we undertake; and of *enjoying prosperity*, in whatever circumstances we are placed.

The next piece is different from all the preceding. In *those*, armies with their ensigns floating to the wind, ships of war riding at anchor, battering engines and instruments

* For this bold and beautiful image, we are obliged to the prophet. "They came as a whirlwind to scatter me." Habak. iii. 14.

† Jer. li. 20. ‡ Psalm cxv. 1.

of death, form the perspective. In *this*, we have, all around, a lovely rural landscape; expressive of peace, and enriched with plenty. Corn and cattle in the valleys; and fruitful vineyards on the hills: and beautiful gardens surrounding the houses.—But who is that graceful and august personage, seated on a throne of ivory and gold?

Eug. This is *Solomon*, having an interview with the queen of *Sheba*. A large train of her attendants throng the avenues of the palace. Some leading foreign animals: some, bearing vases and caskets: all arrayed in strange apparel. The *Israelites* wonder at their outlandish visitants, their costly presents, and peculiar habits. Their visitants are as much surprised at the walls, the towers, and especially the temple of *Jerusalem*. But you, sir, I apprehend, are most pleased with the venerable person, who fills the throne.

Asp. Indeed I am, and so is his royal guest.—You observe, in her robe, her retinue, her deportment, an unpolished kind of grandeur But all in *Solomon* is so splendid, and at the same time so elegant; displays such a delicacy of taste, and such a magnificence of spirit; that the *Sabæan* princess is perfectly in raptures. See! how she stands fixed and gazing with speechless admiration;* like one lost in astonishment, and transported with delight! Her looks speak, what, when she recovers the power of utterance, her tongue expresses; *It was a true report, that I heard in my own land, of thy acts, and of thy wisdom. Howbeit, I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen: and behold! the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceed the fame which I heard.*

Eug. This is a high compliment. Is it right, sir, to praise a man, in such plain terms and such high strains, to his very face? I think, I have heard *Philenor* blame such a practice, as inconsistent with refined manners. And I have heard my father say; no one is a better judge of fine

* This, I apprehend, is the meaning of that remarkably strong expression, used by the sacred historian; *There was no more spirit in her*, 1 Kings x. 5. It seems to have been a well known and customary phrase among the *Hebrews*, to denote the *extremes*, either of surprise, or terror. See Josh. v. 1.

breeding, than *Philenor*. If the most agreeable behaviour, added to the most winning conversation, are what you call *fine breeding*, I am sure, *Philenor* is master of it to a very great degree. I love to be in his company, and am never better pleased than to hear him talk.

Asp. The compliment, though high, is just. It is strictly conformable to truth, and proceeds from the most unaffected *sincerity*. If we consider what follows, we shall have a pattern of true politeness; a propriety and a refinement of address, far surpassing all her majesty's external state.—*Happy are thy men; happy are these thy servants; which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom.* Instead of envying, she congratulates the domestics of *Solomon*, and rejoices in their superior felicity. This is *benevolence.*—*Blessed be the LORD thy GOD, which delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel. Because the LORD loved Israel for ever, therefore made he thee king, to do judgment and justice.* Here he ascribes all his royal virtues, and sublime accomplishments, to the bounty of heaven. Though they are applauded in the person of *Solomon*, they are recognized as the free gift of GOD. This is *piety.*—When the endowments we celebrate, lead us to magnify, not their possessor, but their author; then the poison is corrected, and turned into medicine. Praise, thus circumstanced, loses its malignity, and is rendered salubrious.

It pleases me to perceive, that you take so much notice of the conversation which passes between your worthy father, and his ingenious friends. I promise myself, you will also remember the maxim, which we have now learned from a queen. A queen, whom not only the sacred historian, but our LORD JESUS CHRIST himself vouchsafes to mention, and with marks of approbation. Whose name therefore will be had in honor, when *Semiramis* and *Cleopatra*, the heroines and the beauties, are consigned over to oblivion. The maxim, which I mean, is this—there must be an union of sincerity, of benevolence, and of piety, in order to constitute *true politeness*. Whoever pretends to fine breeding, and is destitute of these qualities, is nothing more than a pretender. He bears just the same proportion

to this ornamental character, as the ape and the monkey bear to the man.

But we have not sufficiently examined our picture. The dome is of cedar; supported by pillars of marble; on which are suspended curtains of silk and embroidery.—The pillars shine with the most glossy polish, and swell upon the eye with the noblest projections. The curtains, pendent in large and easy folds, seem not adhesive to the canvass, but waving in the air.—The throne is exquisitely contrived, richly ornamented, and highly finished. It is evident, the painter had in his eye that memorable observation of scripture, *There was not the like made in any kingdom;* and he has really done all, which art could devise, or colours execute, in order to exemplify the great encomium.

If the monarch was absent, we should desire no better entertainment, than to view the beauties of the apartment: but can hardly allow any attention to the edifice, when so graceful and so grand a presence bespeaks our regard. For I must own, there appears to me something peculiarly excellent in this figure: a *serenity* and *dignity*, without any of that martial air, which adds a tincture of ferocity to the warrior: a *sagacity* and *penetration*, not to be equalled by the wrinkles of age, yet transparent through all the bloom of youth. Piety and wisdom, the love of GOD and the grace of his SPIRIT, give an elevation to the mind; give a secret charm to the countenance; and something more than mortal to the whole man.—I am apt to suspect, *Eugenio*, that you yourself are ready to adopt a new favorite. That you now prefer Solomon even to Scipio; and had rather be like the *beloved of the LORD,** than the darling of *Rome*.

Eug. Every thing in Solomon is so venerable and heavenly, that I am filled with awe, rather than incited to imitation. It is not for a boy, to think of imitating such high perfection!

Asp. Why not, my dear sir? it was GOD who gave Solomon his superior wisdom, and exalted accomplishments.

* *Beloved of the LORD.*—This is the meaning of *Jedidiah*; the name, which Solomon received, by the express Order [illegible]

And GOD is *the same yesterday, to day, and for ever;* as willing to hear, and as able to help *you*, as he was to hear and bless his servant Solomon.—Neither let your youth be a discouragement. *Out of the mouth of every babe and suckling, HE ordaineth strength.** Samuel ministered in the temple, when he was but a child.† Josiah, while he was yet young, began to seek after the GOD of his fathers.‡ Timothy was acquainted with the holy scriptures, from his earliest years.|| And Solomon himself was none of the oldest, when he was favored with that extraordinary vision, and made that admirable choice at Gibeon.§ A passage of scripture, which I dare say, you have read; which I would recommend to your attentive consideration; and which, I hope, you will take for the model of your conduct.—And if you, like that illustrious young prince, desire a wise and understanding heart, more than the affluence of wealth, or the distinctions of honor: if you *seek wisdom as silver, and search for her as for hid treasure: then shall you also understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of GOD.*¶

The next that occurs, presents us with a view of the *sea;* and a most tremendous view it is.

Eug. This is the voyage related by the evangelist; when our LORD, sailing with his disciples, bid the storm be still, and made the ocean calm.

Asp. Then we may truly say; *a greater than Solomon is here!*—Though Solomon was wise, CHRIST is wisdom itself.—Give me leave to hint, upon this occasion, that every picture of CHRIST must necessarily *depreciate* his glorious person. Therefore you will never think, that a few rays beaming round his sacred head, can properly distinguish the SON of GOD; can express either the grace of his offices, or the divinity of his nature. It is not to dis-

* Psal. [illegible] † 1 Sam. ii. 18. ‡ 2 Chron. xxxiv. 3.

|| 2 Tim. iii. 15. § 1 Kings iii. 5, 6, &c.

¶ Prov. ii. 4. 5.

play the perfections of our LORD JESUS himself, but only to give us an idea of one of his works, that the pencil has been employed on this grand subject.

You will also remember; that it was not the main ocean but the lake of *Tiberias*, on which they sailed. However, the painter is at liberty, to make his sea as large as he pleases, and his *storm* as terrible as he can. Accordingly, he has collected all the horrors of a tempest.—Lightnings fire the arch above; and thunders, could thunders have been painted, would have rocked the ground below. Those flaming bolts have smitten a huge promontory, and tore its rugged brown. See! how the rocky fragment is tumbling with impetuous bound, from cliff to cliff.—The waters, lashed by furious winds, heave and toss their tumultuous billows here, they rise in rolling ridges; there, they rage in devouring whirls.—Amidst these horrible commotions, you behold a *vessel* in all the extremity of *distress*. Straining under the blast; battered and half overwhelmed by the surge she can no longer maintain the unequal conflict. She yields to the resistless flood; and begins, evidently begins to sink. perplexed amazed, and at their wit's end, the disciples run to and fro. They shift the tackling; lighten the stowage; try every expedient; and find, to their unspeakable affliction, every expedient ineffectual.

We cast our eye forwards, and their divine MASTER appears, sedately rising from a gentle slumber. He sees the perplexity and horror of his companions, without the least emotion of alarm. He sees destruction approaching, heaven and earth mingling, and, instead of being dismayed *enjoys* the elemental war.—What composure in his mien! what dignity in his attitude! what Majesty, sweetened with compassion, in his aspect! such as could arise from no other cause, but a conscious and undoubted certainty, that not one of the company should perish; that not a hair of their head should be injured; and that all this mighty uproar of nature, should end in a demonstration of his mightier power, and a confirmation of his disciples faith.—He looks abroad into the mutinous sky, and the turbulent deep. He waves, with an authoritative air, his sacred hand, and

adds the great commanding word PEACE: BE STILL.—Do you enquire after the effect? Let *Milton* declare it;

> Confusion heard his voice, and wild uproar
> Stood rul'd.

This is expressed in another draught. Where all is hushed: the tremendous agitations cease, and the most profound tranquility takes place. The water is smooth as glass; we have the picture of a perfect calm; and view those very persons, who, a little while ago, were in the wildest distraction, and in the jaws of ruin, surrounding their LORD as men alive from the dead. Their consternation is turned into wonder, and their pangs of fear into extasies of joy. They acknowledge the omnipotence, and adore the goodness of JESUS.

Eug. Well may they acknowledge his *omnipotence;* since *winds and waves obey him.* Great reason they have to adore his *goodness,* since he rescued them from the very jaws of death; that worst of deaths, perishing in the stormy deep.

Asp. If JESUS CHRIST had vouchsafed such a deliverance to my Eugenio; what would he have thought, or how would he have been affected?

Eug. I should have thought myself inexpressibly obliged; and that I could never shew sufficient gratitude to so great a benefactor.

Asp. Assure yourself then, my dear Sir, that he has done infinitely more for you.—That he has delivered you, not indeed from being swallowed up by the raging billows, but from sinking into the pit of everlasting perdition.—That he has not only rescued you from endless destruction, but obtained eternal life and heavenly happiness for you.—Done all this, not by speaking a word, or issuing a command; but by bearing your guilt, and suffering your punishment; even by dying the most ignominious and tormenting death, in your stead.—Should you not then unfeignedly love HIM? and make it the reigning endeavour of your life to glorify HIM?

Here, Theron returned, and the young Student withdrew; after receiving some affectionate and encouraging compliments from Aspasio. Who was going to enlarge

upon the excellent taste of his friend; the instructive style of his pictures; the good sense and great proficiency of his son. But Theron, far from coveting praise, and fully satisfied with the consciousness, of acting the becoming part, prevented his discourse, by stepping to a pair of glass-folding doors. Which, thrown open, admitted them into the *study*.

A chimney-piece of grey marble, with plain but grand mouldings, formed a very handsome appearance.—In various little niches, were fixed elegant busts; and on the several interstices, hung beautiful prints; representing many of those eminently learned men, who were the ornaments and blessings, both of antient and modern times. The shelves, all around, were accommodated, not incumbered, with books. Aspasio, running over the lettered backs, observed a collection of the most valuable authors, in history and natural philosophy, in poetry and divinity.

You will easily perceive, said Theron, that I am somewhat singular in furnishing my study, as well as in ornamenting the avenue. My books are not for shew, but use; and claim a regard, rather on account of their worth, than their number.—An immense multitude of volumes, I have always thought, is more likely to embarrass the attention than to improve the understanding. A *huge* library seems to resemble a perplexing *Labyrinth*; and often bewilders the mind in its pursuits, instead of leading it expeditiously to the acquisition of truth.

When people are eager to peruse a multiplicity of writings, it frequently happens, that in reading all, they digest none*. They taste some empty and transient amusement; but collect no solid or lasting advantage. Their minds are somewhat like those capacious looking-glasses, which we

* The author of Night-Thoughts has touched this subject, with great judgment, and equal sprightliness.

Voracious Learning, often over-fed
Digests not into sense, the motley meal.
This Forager, on other's wisdom, leaves
Her native farm, her reason quite untill'd.
With mixt manure she surfeits the rank soil,
Dung'd but not dress'd; and rich to beggary.

have seen exposed in the most frequented and populous streets of London. They receive all manner of shadowy images, but no substantial impression. A thousand figures *pass through* them, not one *abides* in them.

Our books, replied Aspasio, as well as our friends, should rather be *select*, than *numerous*. For my part, I would desire no more than two or three of the most correct and masterly writers in any science. These, a person of moderate capacity may be able to comprehend; and not comprehend only, but enrich his memory with the choicest sentiments, and make the substance of their works his own. —He will, by repetition and familiar converse, enter into their *spirit*, and acquire their *manner*. While a rambler in reading, does little more than gratify his fancy, without refining his taste, or amending his heart.

Upon this Aspasio turned himself; and espied, in one corner of the apartment, the celestial and terrestrial *globes*; in another, a large reflecting *telescope*; and on the top of a buroe, one or two of the best *microscopes*.

These instruments, resumed Theron, have opened an inexhaustible fund of the finest entertainments. They have furnished us with *new eyes*; and brought up, I will venture to say, a *new world* into our view. They give us a sight of wonders, which may seem incredible to the incurious vulgar; and which were utterly unknown, to the most inquisitive sages of antiquity. They charm the eye with a display of beauties, of inimitable beauties, even where nothing worthy of notice was expected. They throw the mind into a pleasing transport of admiration; and from the meanest, lowest objects, raise the most *amiable* and *exalted* ideas of the All-glorious CREATOR.

I have often regretted, that such rational and manly gratifications should be almost universally supplanted, by the fantastical and childish amusements in vogue. Why should not the contemplation of nature's surprising novelties, be as acceptable an entertainment, as the stale diversion of quadrille; be as refined an employ for a leisure hour, as to count the spots on a pack of cards?—The Ladies, I am very sure, might find brighter colours, and more delicate

ornaments, in the robes and head-dress of a common *fly*; than ever they found amidst the trinkets of a *toy-shop*. And was the fair circle of females once acquainted with the radiant varnish and rich studs, which enamel the cover of a *beetle's* wing; I am apt to think, they would view with less rapture, with more indifference, perhaps with a becoming disdain, all the petty fancies of a *beu's* wardrobe.

A few days ago, when the accomplished *Manilia* favored us with a visit, I shewed her, through a magnifying glass, the sting of a bee, the scale of a soal, the wing of a gnat, and some other *beautiful minims* of nature; together with the powder, which adheres to our finger, when we touch the body of a moth.—" Amazing! cried the young lady. " What elegant figures! what enchanting finery!"

> ———————— Smallest lineaments exact,
> In all the liveries deck'd of summer's pride,
> With spots of gold and purple, azure and green.*

" How perfect the polish, and how high the finishing, of " that little *weapon?*—This piece of *defensive* armour, how " skilfully contrived, and how curiously wrought! Here, " rising into little ridges, like the bosses of a buckler; fit- " ted to repel injuries. There, scooped into little cavi- " ties designed, I supposed, to diminish its weight; that " the coat of mail may not incumber, even while it defends " the puny wearer.—What I took to be whitish despicable " rag, is the *neatest fan*, I ever beheld. Mounted on " Sticks † in imitable tempering and slender. Tinged " with all the soft and lovely colours of the most glossy " mother of pearl.—But, what astonishes me more than " all, is the view of that coloured dust; which your instru- " ment has turned into a *cluster* of *feathers*. Every one " wrought off with a regularity and a delicacy, that are be- " yond the power of description. The finest stroke drawn

* Milton, Book VII.

† These *sticks*, are the little *ribs*, which support, at proper intervals, the fine transparent membrane of the wing.

" by the *Italian* pen, compared with the extreme minu-
" teness of the shaft, is broad and bulky as an Admiral's
" mast. A speck of leaf-gold, could it be weighed against
" the exquisite attenuations of the vane,* would seem
" more substantial and ponderous than yonder marble
" slab.

" How nice, even to a prodigy, must be the mechanism
" of the *animalcule* race! I see globules, I see tides of
" blood, rolling through mæanders inexpressibly finer,
" than the finest hair.—Stranger still! I see sholes of active
" creatures, expatiating in a single drop of water: taking
" their pastime amidst such a fancy canal, as unstraitened
" and as much at large, as *Leviathan* in the abysses of the
" ocean.—A whole kingdom of these creatures, though
" collected into a body, are quiet undiscernable by the
" naked eye. What then must be the size of every *indi-*
" *vidual?* Yet in every individual there is a compleat
" system of limbs; each limb must have muscles and nerves;
" each nerve must have sense and strength; and all these
" are assembled, though not crouded, in a living *atom.*—To
" reflect upon the texture of vessels, and the operation
" of organs, so complex, so numerous, yet so inconceivably
" minute; how it awakens admiration! fills me with re-
" verence of the Almighty MAKER! and yields a pleasure,
" infinitely superior to all the modish amusements of our
" sex!—Your discoveries of *life in miniature,* have given
" me a disgust of, what is called, *high life,* and its solemn
" fopperies. You have spoiled me, *Theron,* for a fashionable
" trifler. I shall no longer relish the dull oeconomy of the
" fan, or the poor parade of the snuff-box."

Asp. Have you nothiug to say of the *telescope?*—I believe it must be my providence to celebrate this admirable invention; and I wish I could do it, with *Manilia's* brilliant imagination.—If the *microscope* leads us downward, to the curious secrets of the animalcule creation; the *telescope* bears us upward, to the grand peculiarities of the starry regions. The eye, conducted by this wonderful guide, vi-

* Vane is the feathery part of a quill.

sits a variety of majestic orbs, which would otherwise be lost in unmeasurable tracts of æther.—This, far more surprizing than the discoveries of *Columbus*, has found out new colonies of worlds, in every quarter of the nocturnal skies. This has placed a glittering crescent on the brow of one* of the planets; and has given others a most stately train of attendants.†

Tell me, Theron; could you discern the full choir of the constellations, or distinguish the variegated face of the moon, without the aid of your telescopic tube? Could you, with your unassisted eye, get a sight of *Jupiter's* satellites, or procure a glimpse of *Saturn's* ring?—Without that supplementary aid to our sight, they are quite imperceptible; though the satellites of the former, are incomparably more magnificent, than the retinue of all the monarchs in the world; and compared with the ring of the latter, all the bridges on ten thousand rivers, are less than the ferule of your cane.

As the *telescope* to the eye, so is *revelation* to the understanding. It discovers truths, which exclusive of such a discovery, had been for ever hid from the most sagacious minds.—'Tis strange to the unlearned observer, that this ponderous globe of earth and seas, should wheel its rapid circuit round the sun. But the telescope has rendered this fact clear to a demonstration.—'Tis strange likewise to our natural apprehensions, that we should die in *Adam*, and be undone by our first parents disobedience. Nor less so, that we should be made alive in CHRIST, and derive our recovery from his imputed righteousness. But revelation makes this doctrine as certain, as it is comfortable.

Ther. Does revelation make it certain?—This is a point not yet established, but taken for granted. I rather apprehend, that revelation, in no place maintains it, in many places disavows it.—During your absence, Aspasio, I have spent some time in searching the scriptures, with a parti-

* The Planet Venus.

† The Satellites of Jupiter and Saturn.

cular view to this tenet. I can find no such expression in the whole bible, as the imputation of CHRIST's righteousness. If it was so leading an article, as you represent; surely, it could not have been entirely forgotten by the inspired writers, nor utterly excluded from their body of divinity.

Asp. The very identical expression may not occur, and yet the doctrine be abundantly taught. I believe, you never met with the word *resurrection*, in any part of the Pentateuch; nor ever read the phrase *satisfaction*, in all the new testament. Yet our LORD fully proved the truth of the former, from the writings of *Moses*: and you yourself have acknowledged the latter, to be the unanimous sense of the apostles and evangelists.

In the epistles to the *Romans*, we have express and repeated mention of a righteousness imputed. *What* or *whose* righteousness, can be the subject of this assertion?—Not the righteousness of *angels*. They are a superior class of being, and have no such intimate connection with our nature.—Not the righteousness of eminent *saints*. This is the exploded error of popery; and furnishes the *Romish* zealots with that chimera of arrogance and folly, works of supererogation.—Not any righteousness of our own: for, it is positively declared, to be *without works** in which no works of our own have any concurrence, or the least share. What other righteousness then can be meant, but the righteousness of our great SUBSTITUTE, SURETY, and SAVIOUR? who took our nature; discharged our debt; and is therefore styled, *JEHOVAH our righteousness*.†

Ther. This seems contrary to the whole tenour of the sacred instructions. What says the prophet? "When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive."‡—Here, that greatest of blessings, the salvation of the soul, is ascribed to a departure from evil, and a perseverance in good: to a real alteration in a

* Rom. iv. 6. † Jer. xxiii. 6.

‡ Ezek. xviii. 27.

man's own temper and conduct, not to any fanciful application of some transmissive righteousness from another.

Asp. Let me ask my *Theron;* is there no wickedness, but riot and debauchery, profaneness and injustice?—*unbelief*, though it may pass without censure or notice in a system of morality, is, in the volume of revelation, declared a *capital* crime. Our LORD, speaking of the HOLY SPIRIT, mentions it as a signal part of his office, that *he shall convince the world of sin.*—Of what sin? scandalous violations of moral rectitude? This was a needless employ. The light of reason is sufficient, to evince such a charge; and the court of conscience is erected, to pass the deserved sentence.—Of sin, adds the heavenly TEACHER, *because they belive not on me**: on my death, as the cause of their forgiveness; on my righteousness, as the ground of their acceptance; on my SPIRIT, as the powerful principle of their holiness.

Unbelief treats GOD as a liar;† beacause it rejects the testimony, which he has bore concerning his beloved SON. Unbelief tramples on the blood of CHRIST, and is a most contemptuous affront to all his saving offices.—Unbelief would counteract the operations of the HOLY GHOST; whose peculiar work it is, to testify of *CHRIST*, and make manifest his righteousness. - To say all in a word; unbelief is that *great*, that *comprehensive* sin, which scornfully rejects, or impiously renounces, the most glorious method of salvation, which omniscience itself could devise.

The wicked man, therefore, never turns from his wickedness; till he turns, by a true faith, to JESUS CHRIST. Till then, he is a rebel against the *gospel*, however he may pay some specious and partial regard to the law. So flagrant a rebel, that he stands particularly excepted, even in the act of evangelical indemnity. For, as *he that believeth on the SON, hath everlasting life; so, he that believeth not, is condemned already, and the wrath of GOD abideth on him.*‡

Ther. What are the *Psalmists* sentiments on this subject? does not he represent the matter in a very different light?

* John xvi. 9 † 1 John v. 10. ‡ John iii. 18, 36.

Thou, LORD art merciful; for thou rewardest every man according to his, not another's *works*.*

Asp. Weighty saying! May it impress our very hearts! GOD is merciful, and *therefore* rewardeth. From whence it appears, what we call a reward, is really an act of mercy, rather than of justice. The *wages* of sin is death; but the *gift* (says the apostle, altering his style, and making a very observable distinction) the gift of GOD is eternal life.†

The inspired writer subjoins, not *for*, but *according to* every man's works. A man's works are the measure, not the meritorious cause. To merit, is the sole prerogative of the SAVIOUR's blood and obedience. To these it is owing, that our imperfect services are honored with any acceptance; much more that they are recompensed with any reward.—Though, after a sinner is justified, his own deeds find favor in the sight of the LORD: yet in the justification of sinners, GOD has no respect to any human performances. He has no respect to one man as better than another, but to the righteousness of his blessed SON alone.

Ther. Does not this exposition of yours, clash with that truly generous acknowledgment of St. *Peter?* "In every nation, he that feareth GOD, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."‡ Here, it is undeniably evident, that acceptance with our CREATOR, is founded on a man's own piety, and personal integrity; upon his fearing GOD, and working righteousness.

Asp. Rightly to understand this text, we should enquire into the circumstances of the history.—The Apostle had been strongly and most unreasonably prejudiced in favor of the *Jews*; imagining, that the salvation of CHRIST, like the dispensation of *Moses*, must be confined to his countrymen.—But now, having considered the purpor of his late heavenly vision; having compared it with the angelic message, delivered to *Cornelius*; and being made acquainted with the character of that valuable man; he breaks out

* Psal. lxii. 12. † Rom. vi 23.

‡ Acts x. 35.

into this truly Catholic declaration.—" My prejudices are " vanished. My sentiments are enlarged. From the in- " stance before me, it is *demonstrably* certain; that the " HOLY ONE of *Israel*, does no longer appropriate the " blessings of his covenant, to any particular person, fa- " mily, or people. *But, in every Nation, he that feareth* " *GOD; and*, from a principle of religion in the heart, " *worketh righteousness* in the life, *is accepted with him*. " So accepted, as to be an object of the Divine favor, and " an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.

This, I think, is the exact meaning of the place. And let it be recollected, that no one truly fears, or can possibly please GOD, without faith.* That no prayers can be set forth as the incense; no alms can go up as a memorial before GOD; nor any sacrifices be acceptable in his sight, but only through JESUS CHRIST. For which reasons, it seems necessary to suppose, that *Cornelius*, though a heathen by birth, had believed through grace.—Nay: it is evident from the context, that he had heard of CHRIST; had some acquaintance with the design of his coming, and the execution of his office;† enough to be the ground of a real, though perhaps an infantile faith. The business of the apostle was, to lead this convert into the clear light, and full privileges of the gospel; to ratify and confirm his title to them, by the sacred seal of baptism; and introduce him, as the *first-fruits* of the Gentiles, into the Christian church.

Nothing therefore can be concluded from this passage, but that the glad tidings of *Christianity* are for *Jews*, for *Gentiles*, for all people—that, by faith, even the Gentiles obtain a good report, and are enabled to bring forth the fruits of righteousness—and faith, though weak, yet if sincerely improved, will certainly be increased; will " go " from strength to strength "

Ther. Does not our SAVIOUR, in describing the process, and foretelling the issue of the last decisive tryal, assign a kingdom to the righteous? Assign it in this precise

* Heb. xi. 6. † See Ver. 36. 37.

view, as a proper remumeration of *their own* good works; saying, in the most express terms; *Come ye blessed of my FATHER, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you, from the foundation of the world:* FOR, *I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat;* FOR, *&c.* FOR, *&c.**

Asp. Be pleased to take notice of the expression. They are bidden to *inherit:* and what is freer than an inheritance? was your patrimony the reward of your own service?—Observe also the *reason* alledged, and compare it with the rule of judicature. *He that believeth*, saith the supreme JUDGE, *shall be saved.* This is the avowed, the invariable standard by which he proceeds, in administering everlasting judgment. Accordingly, he confers eternal life on the righteous, as persons intitled to this great felicity, on the foot of his own gracious appointment.

FOR denotes, not the *foundation*, but the *evidence*, of their right. "I acquit such a peson," says the arbitrator in a judicial claim; "*for* the witnesses depose, that the debt is "paid." The deposition which answers to these righteous acts, is the *proof*; payment of the debt, wich corresponds with CHRIST's perfect obedience, is the *cause* † of the discharge.—*For ye have given*; ye have abounded in all instances of duty to ME, and love to your brethren; and thereby have manifested yourselves true believers.

It may be farther observed, that our LORD says not, ye have done it to your fellow-creatures, but *to these my brethren* ‡. He commends not every random act of good nature or generosity, but such kinds of beneficence only, as carry the *christian* stamp; were exercised to a disciple, "in the name of a disciple," and *these* most evidently spring from faith; *these* undeniably attest its sincerity.

* Matt. xxv. 30.

† The Spring is come, says the countryman; for the orchard blooms, and the blackbird sings. The blooming of the trees, and the melody of the birds, were never supposed to create, only to characterize, the delightful season. They are, not the cause, but the proof of its taking place.

‡ Matt. xxv. 40.

Ther. Are not these distinctions more *subtle*, than solid?

Asp. To me they appear in no such light. If you think otherwise, let us appeal to those excellent persons themselves. The true, the very remarkable turn of their sentiments, will fully decide our question.—Do they lay *any stress* upon their own religious duties, and beneficent deeds? far from relying on them, farther, still from pleading them, they bestow not a *single thought* upon them. Having fixed their hopes on the ROCK of ages, they forget these transient bubbles*. Nay, they *wonder* to hear their exalted MASTERS, making any honorable mention of such defective services.

O, that we may be enabled, through the whole course of our lives, to folow the example of their piety; and, when we appear before the tremendous tribunal, to imitate their humility and wisdom! *their humility*; in renouncing themselves, and disclaiming all desert of their own. *Their wisdom;* in reposing their whole confidence, on the righteousness of their GOD and SAVIOUR.

Ther. Our LORD makes no mention of this doctrine, in his sermon on the mount. Whereas, if it had been so *very material*, he would at least have touched upon it, in that comprehensive summary of true religion.

Asp. Our LORD says not a word, concerning the sacrifice of his death. Neither is there a syllable, relating to his intercession for transgressors. But are these articles of our *faith* to be deemed fictitious or superfluous; because, they are not expressly inculcated, in that admirable treatise of *practical* divinity?

However, upon a more attentive examination, perhaps, we shall find the point most strongly *implied*, though not distinctly *specified;* its necessity demonstrated, though its nature be not explained.—The illustrious TEACHER

* Bubbles they are, compared with the all-glorious obedience of CHRIST; or considered in reference to the grand affair of justification before GOD.—But as bubbles, or watery vehicles inflated with air, are the means of exhibiting the beautiful colours of the rainbow; so these services, though poor and imperfect, bear testimony to the existence of that precious grace—Faith.

† Matt v. 3.

opened his mouth, and with a peculiar solemnity said; *blessed are the poor in spirit.*—But *who* are they? Not the person, who soothe themselves with the flattering conceit of the *Loadicean* church; *I am rich in* obedience, *and increased in* spiritual *goods.** Those rather, who see their indigence; bewail their guilt; and hunger and thirst after the justifying merit of a REDEEMER. Who, from the very bottom of an humbled heart, confess; "LORD, I, am no more "able to keep every jot and tittle of thy holy law, than I "am capable of atoning for my innumerable sins.— "*CHRIST* must be my righteousness, as well as my pro-"pitiation, or else I am irrecoverably undone."

The inimitable PREACHER farther informs his hearers; That, *unless their righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, they shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of Heaven.*†—How must christians exceed the Pharisees? Not only in being *sincere*; in having respect unto *all* GOD's commandments; but also in possessing a *complete* righteousness. He speaks of that righteousness, by which men enter into the kingdom of Heaven. He speaks of such a righteousness, as is described in the following parts of the sermon, and exactly corresponds with the demands of the law. He speaks of such a righteousness, as admits of no failure, but arises to the very summit of perfection. And where, where will you *find* this righteousness unless you have recourse to the consummate obedience of the great MEDIATOR?

Ther. The ORACLE of heaven, you know, was once consulted upon that most momentous of all questions; how a person may ascertain his title to life and immortality? and what is the tenour of the sacred rescript?—We are referred to the ten commandments; and in the most explicit terms, with the most peremptory air, told; *This* DO, *and thou shalt live*‡.

Asp. *That* particular person, if you please, was referred to the ten commandments; not *we*, and mankind in gene-

* Rev. iii 17. † Matt. v. 20.

‡ Matt. xix. 17. Luke x. 28.

ral—Our LORD, in the preceding verses, had informed his disciples; that they must *receive the kingdom of GOD*, or the grace of the gospel, and the blessings it proposes, *as a little child.* And this can hardly signify, as the result or consequence of their own doings.

Ther. "That particular person referred; Not we and "mankind in general!"—I don't understand your meaning Aspasio.

Asp. You will observe then, that our LORD's reply was not an universal direction, but an answer *ad hominem*; peculiarly adapted to the young gentleman's application. Which, however it may be admired, was one of the wisest. —Instead of asking; "How shall a poor guilty mortal, "who is every day offending, obtain forgiveness from the "righteous GOD?" Instead of saying; how shall I, who "am not able to think a *good thought*, make sure my title "to an eternal weight of glory?" Our querist demands; *What good thing shall I* DO, *that I may inherit eternal life?* The reply proceeds upon the enquirer's own principles.— "*If* you expect life and immortality, upon such *legal* terms; "know, that your obedience must be nothing less, than a "*perfect* conformity to the divine law. Perform all its pre-"cepts, in their utmost extent, and with an unremitted "perseverance, then"—But alas! such perfection is too high for fallen creatures; they cannot attain unto it. Necessarily, therefore, must they drop all such pretensions, and have recourse to some other method of justification.

Ther. Why did that "wonderful COUNSELLOR," if such was the purport of his answer, express himself so obscurely? why did he not divert his promising scholar from this fruitless attempt; and put him in the right, the practicable way of obtaining salvation?

Asp. This he did, with the finest address, and in the most skilful manner.—Had our LORD affirmed, "you are "wordly; you are covetous; your riches are your GOD:" such a charge would, in all probability, have been as confidently denied, as it was plainly urged. Therefore he brings this specious hypocrite to a *test* *, which could not

Matt. xix. 21. *If thou will be perfect, sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor.*

be evaded, and which was sure to discover the truth. A test, which laid open the palpable and enormons defects of his so much boasted obedience. Which made it appear, that, instead of keeping *all* the commandments, this vain self-justiciary had not obeyed the very *first*. But, amidst all his towering imaginations of himself, had been, and at that very instant was, a sordid groveling idolater: who preferred his transitory possessions on earth, to an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven.—Could any expedient be more suitable to the case? or better calculated to reduce him, intoxicated as he was with pride, to a sober humble mind? To beat him off from his false foundation, *the righteousness which is of the law*; and lead him to a reliance on the promised, the expected, the present MESSIAH?

It puts me in mind of my friend *Sagacio's* conduct. Which seems to have some conformity with our LORD's procedure; and may, possibly, tend to illustrate its propriety.—visiting one of his unlearned neighbours, he found him in company with a certain talkative stranger; who was haranguing, at an *extravagant* rate, on the wonders of astronomy.—*Sagacio* soon perceived, that the chief furniture of this extraordinary adebt, say in a little acquaintance with the technical terms, and somewhat more than a little share of assurance. How should he bring the self-plumed sciolist to a little *modesty* of sentiment and *decorum* of conversation? he took leave to ask, "what the word "*astronomy* might signify?" The orator was struck dumb in a moment. He had never informed himself, it seems, that astronomy related to the order and regulation of the stars. This single question taught our minute philosopher, more effectually than twenty lectures on the subject. It taught him his *own ignorance*; and that he had the very rudiments of his so much admired science still to learn.

Ther. What will you say to those famous passages in the epistle of St. *James? by works a man is justified. Was not Abraham our father justified by works?** can any words be plainer in their meaning? or can any meaning be more directly opposite to the whole scope of your argumentation?

* Jam. ii. 21, 24.

Asp. This I would say *Theron.*—The passages you quote, when detached from the context, may *seem* inconsistent with the declarations of another apostle. As a limb, when *wrenched* from its natural situation, appears with an air of disproportion. Whereas, reduce the dislocated part, and it will recover the symmetry of its shape; it will harmonize exactly with the animal system.—Replace likewise these assertions; consider them in *connection* with the whole paragraph; and they will be found, if not unisons, yet perfect concords, with the strain of St. *Paul's* teaching.

What is the design and aim of St. *James?* To distinguish a genuine from an insincere faith. Observe, how he states the case. It is not, *though a man* have *faith*; but *though a man say, he hath faith.** This is mentioned, as the boast of some hypocritical professor. So that the apostle is evidently dealing with a *pretender* to the precious gift. Accordingly he demands, with great propriety and spirit; *shew* me thy faith. Prove the reality of thy claim. Prove it to *me*, and to the church; to thy fellow-christians. What thou callest thy faith, if it be not productive of righteous dispositions and godly works, we must pronounce spurious, worthless, dead.

Having detected the *counterfeit*, he proceeds to describe the *sterling*. The grand characteristic of which is, a frame of mind and a course of action, corresponding with the doctrine believed. By this touchstone the faith of our renowned progenitor was tried; and, being tried, was "found unto praise, "and honor, and glory." *Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered* Isaac *his son upon the altar?* justified! How; As to acceptance with the supreme JUDGE? No: this was effected long before *Isaac* was offered, was born, or conceived in the womb. But when the believing and justified patriarch, exercised that heroic act of self-denial, resignation and obedience; then he demonstrated himself, to be a real unfeigned believer; then his justification was evidenced, to all his cotemporaries, and to all generations. *By* this and such other work, his *faith was made perfect;* answered its

* Jam. ii. 14.

proper end; appeared to be of the true, the triumphant, the scriptural kind; since it overcame the world, overcame self, and regarded GOD as all in all.

Upon the whole; St. *Paul* speaks concerning the justification of our persons; St. *James* concerning the justification of our *faith* †.—St. *Paul* describes the *manner* of being justified, before the all-seeing GOD; St. *James* points out the *proof* of a justified state, as it is visible to men; *seest thou.*—The former proceeds from the immaculate righteousness of CHRIST, placed to our account; the latter consists in the fruits of righteousness, adorning our life.—Rightly understood, therefore, these passages are not the least contradictory to the epistles of St. *Paul*, or to the scope of my argumentation. But are a seasonable caveat and a proper preservative, against misunderstanding these, or perverting this.

Ther. I wish, you would read that concise, but judicious abridgment of true religion comprized in the fifteenth *Psalm*. The sacred penman, for his own and for the information of all mankind, asks; *LORD, who shall dwell in thy tabernacle, or who shall rest upon thy holy hill?* To this most interesting enquiry, the following verses are a full and satisfactory answer. The whole of which turns upon a discharge of moral duties; *walking uprightly, and working righteousness.* Without a syllable, or a single hint, concerning the very superior excellence of faith, or the extreme necessity of a vicarious obedience.

Asp. I have often read, and I well remember, that instructive *Psalm.* And I beg leave to observe, once for all, with relation to such passages of the Old Testament; that they suppose the persons, whom they describe, to be convinced of their *natural corruption*; to be humbled under a sense of their *natural guilt*; and to live in a conscientious observance of the *expiatory sacrifices*. All which had an invariable reference to CHRIST, and derived their whole virtue from his mediation.

† That the expression used by St. James, signifies this declarative justification, is plain, from 1 Tim. iii. 16.

Would any of the Jewish Saints, have dared to advance a plea for eternal blessedness, upon the foot of their own conformity to such moral directions? neglecting, at the same time, the sacrifices of the three great festivals, or a believing improvement of the daily oblation.—By no means. They were, and they would acknowledge themselves, deplorably defective. They would plead the promise of free grace, and fly to the blood, which GOD himself had appointed *to make atonement for their souls*.—By such sentiments and such a conduct, they reduced to practice the very essence of our doctrine: disavowing their own deeds, however virtuous or religious; and trusting in the strength of *Israel, the LORD our righteousness*. Who alone fulfilled all the precepts, contained in this excellent formulary of duty. Who was also the substance of every purifying and of every propitiatory rite. Whom, therefore, those holy people regarded, as the only cause of justification and salvation.

Ther. Has not the sacred writer expressly said, at the close of the *Psalm? Whoso* DOETH *these things, shall never fall.*

Asp. He has: and this, I apprehend, is his meaning.— "Persons of such a temper, and such a practice, bear the "marks of GOD's children, and are meet for his glory. "Accordingly, they shall never fall, either into total apos-"tacy here, or final condemnation hereafter. They are "now heirs, and in due time shall be possessors, of his "eternal kingdom."

But you will take notice, that all these duties and qualifications, only *characterize*, not constitute, the inheritor of heaven.—You will likewise advert to another very remarkable circumstance in the description; *he setteth not by himself, but is lowly in his own eyes* *. Or, as the more expressive original speaks, he is *despicable* and *vile* in his own sight. So far from aspiring to self-justification, that he even condemns and abhors himself. He falls down as a most unworthy wretch, at the foot of infinitely free grace.

* Psal. xv. 4.

Ther. I cannot but think, it is the *current doctrine* of scripture, and I am sure, it is one of the *first principles* which the light of nature teaches—That the most high GOD must necessarily love righteousness, and take pleasure in the righteous.

Asp. If, what is called, the light of nature was to publish a gospel, it would be formed upon your plan. It would bestow favor only on the *innocent*, the *virtuous*, and the *holy.*—But the gospel of CHRIST runs in a very different strain. This brings pardon for the condemned, and blessings for the accursed. This is health to the sick, and recovery to the ruiend. *The LORD hath anointed me*, saith its divine AUTHOR, *to preach good tidings to the meek;* to the poor, the afflicted, the miserable.—*He hath sent me to bring up the broken-hearted*; whose misery is so great, that it seems to admit of no relief; but is plunging them in despair, and even breaking their hearts—*to proclaim liberty to the captives*, the wretched captives of sin, and death, and hell—*and the opening of the prison to them that are bound*; bound in the chains of ignorance, impotence, and misery*.

As I am myself a most unworthy sinner, you must not be displeased, if I espouse the cause of such unhappy creatures. —Yet, though a friend of sinners, I am no enemy to the righteous. I entirely agree with my *Theron*, that the most high GOD necessarily loves righteousness. Only I went to be informed, *where* this excellent and lovely quality is to be found?—Not among the *Gentiles*. They have swerved from the dictates of natural conscience.—Not among the *Jews*. They have broken the holy commandment delivered on mount *Sinai*.—Not among *Christians*. For, if GOD should enter into Judgment with us, we could not answer him one of a thousand.—In the kingdom of *Æthiopia*, or in the country of the *Moors*, where will you find the *native* whites?

The SAVIOUR of the world, who overlooked nothing valuable, not so much as the widow's mite, saw none

B b

* Isai. lxi. 1

among the race of *Adam*, that were entitled to the character of *righteous*. He who gave himself a ransom for all, makes no application to such persons*. They lay quite beyond the line of his commission.—Why? because he had a quarrel with real Godliness? because he sullenly *disesteemed* personal goodness? or was unable to *distinguish* the excellency of inherent virtue?—No verily. But because he knew, that, amiable as these qualifications are, they have no existence in the human heart; till the sinner, reconciled by his death, be sanctified also by his SPIRIT.

You remember, perhaps, that remarkable answer, which the *Spartans* returned to a threatening Embassy, sent by *Philip* the formidable King of *Macedon*, nothing could be more concise; and, I think, nothing was ever more spirited and significant.

Ther. *Philip* gave them to understand by his ambassadors; "That, if he entered their territories he would burn "their towns; put the inhabitants to the sword; and "spread destruction, whereever he advanced." To which insolent and cruel menace the brave *Lacedæmonians* made no other reply than—IF.

Is this the story, to which you refer?

Asp. The very same.—And when you are speaking of human righteousness, as the cause of our acceptance with the eternal GOD, I would borrow the language of a *Spartan*. IF, shall be my reply.—*If*, seclusive of the obedience, and independent on the SPIRIT of CHRIST, you can furnish yourself with this endowment: Or, *if* you can carry your righteousness to that perfection, which may equal the purity of the law, and comport with the majesty of the LAWGIVER: *then* trust in it; let it be the ground of your confidence; and seek no better foundation.

But whoever shall, in this manner, seek for his recommendation to the favor of GOD; will act like the mistaken countryman in *Horace*. Who, being unable to ford the river, took up a resolution to wait, till the stream was all run by:

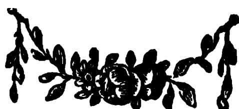
* Matt. ix. 13.

——————————— At ille
Labitur, & labetur in omne volubilis Ævum.*

Ther. Here, I fancy, we must take leave of your countryman. If he adheres to his resolution, we shall find him in the very same situation, when breakfast is over; and may resume our subject, just where it is discontinued.

* Vain man, desist: such flatt'ring hopes forego:
It flows, and flows, and will for ever flow.





DIALOGUE VII.



THERON.

To me, who have spent the greatest part of the winter in *town*, these scenes of the *country* are inexpressibly pleasing. Take, who will, the gilded saloon, and the silken settee; so long as I can shelter myself under the canopy of such a spreading beech, and use one of its coarse, mis-shapen roots for my seat.

'Tis true, we see no longer those splendid brocades, and elegant toupees, which distinguish the *park* and the *mall*.—But we have, full in our view, a multitude of honest rustics; pursuing their chearful labours in yonder *meadow*. Some, moving the luxuriant herbage. Some, spreading it to the sun, or raising it into regular cocks. Others, loading their waggons with the hay, or clearing the ground with their rakes. The ground, cleared of its soft incumbrance, appears fresh and green, like another spring. While the exhalations of the tedded grass, floating in the air, give a rural perfume to the gale.—And which, my *Aspasio*, which are the most valuable objects? The *little labourers* of the hive, that enrich themselves and regale their masters? Or the *gay flutterers* of the garden, whose whole life is nothing but sport; and their highest character is, to be insignificantly pretty?

Asp. I understand you, *Theron*, and have the satisfaction to agree with you.—In this retirement, we hear none of the wanton and corrupting airs of the *opera*; no, nor the majestic and ennobling melody of the *oratorio.*—But we have a band of music stationed in the grove; and a concert of native harmony, warbling from the boughs. We are entertained with the music, which charmed the human ear, long before* Jubal found out his instruments; and thousands of years before *Handel* composed his notes. The bulfinch, and a multitude of little tuneful throats, strike the key. The thrush below, and the sky-lark responsive from above, *diversify* and *exalt* the strain. The blackbird, somewhat like the solemn organ, with notes perfectly mellow, and gracefully sonorous, crowns the choir. While the turtle's melancholy voice, and the murmuring water's plaintive tone, *deepen* and *complete* the universal symphony.

This music constituted the first song of hanksgiving, and formed the first vocal praise, which the All-gracious CREATOR received, from his new-made world. This is neither the parent of effeminacy, nor a pander for vice; but refines the affections, even while it amuses the imagination.

Ther. Yes; all the entertainments of nature, are calculated to secure our innocence, as well as to gratify our fancy. And what is another very agreeable circumstance, these gratifications which afford the sublimest pleasure, are exhibited *gratis.* While those, which enervate the mind, and debauch the affections, must be *dearly purchased.*—Every one cannot gain enterance into the boxes or the pit, when some celebrated *tragedy* is brought upon the stage. But every one may behold the beauteous exhibitions of spring, and the finished productions of *autumn.* All may contemplate the machinery of nature, and the wonders of creation thereby enjoying a far more exquisite amusement, without any of the guilt, or any of the danger.

The inhabitants of yonder villages, have never beheld the splendid procession, which solemnizes the coronation of a monarch; nor the *gaudy illuminations*, which distinguish

* Gen. iv. 21.

the anniversary of his birth. But they see, almost every morning, a much nobler spectocle displayed in the east. They see the great *Ruler* of the *Day*, or rather the envoy from day's eternal SOVEREIGN, making his entry amidst the spaces of the sky.—The heavens are strewed with colours, which outvie the pinks and carnations. The grass is decked with dew-drops, and every plant is strung, as it were, with pearls. All around the darkness retires, and sweet refreshing gales arise.—At length the magnificent luminary appears. And what is all the ostentatious pomp of kings? What is all the glitter of the most brilliant courts? compared with his transcendent luster? This spectacle we may behold, without loss of time, or prejudice to health. Nay, we cannot behold it, without *improving* one, and *redeeming* the other. So beneficial are even the pleasures, which nature yields! so serviceable the very diversions, to which she invites!

Asp. Thus gracious is the Almighty MAKER, in the constitution of *material* things. the substantial and the valuable, are open to every one; are accessible by all. Only the tinsel and the trappings, are the property of a few; the poor prerogative of wealth.

No less gracious is GOD, in the disposal of *spiritual* favors. These, though infinitely more excellent, yet are equally free. We are invited to *buy them, without money, and without price**.—What do you give for the benefits of the rising sun, or the delights of this rural melody? The case is much the same, with regard to the righteousness, by which we are justified, and all the blessings of salvation.

Ther. This brings to our remembrance the countryman, whom we left on the banks of the river. And, for aught I can see, *Theron* and the rustic are pretty much upon a footing. The first, as far from acceding to your notions; as the last, is from gaining his point.

Asp. Have you any objection, *Theron*, to these gifts of nature; because, they are neither purchased by your money, nor produced by your own toil?

* Isai. lv

Ther. But who can ever expect to obtain pardon, and peace, and eternal salvation, at so cheap a rate? It seems to be all delusion, *Aspasio.*

Asp. So *cheap!* then you would pay somewhat, I perceive, by way of price.—But give me leave to ask; what price did you pay to GOD your MAKER, for fashioning you in your mother's womb? what price have you paid to GOD your PRESERVER, for upholding you ever since you was born? or what price do you think of paying to GOD the supreme PROPRIETOR, for the ground, on which you tread; for the air, in which you breath; for the light, by which you see? just the *same* price must you advance to GOD your SAVIOUR, for all his justifying merits.

Both *these* and *those* proceed from the same BENEFACTOR. They are all absolutely necessary, either for the welfare of the body, or the happiness of the soul. And they are all vouchsafed on the same terms; or rather, in the same way of sovereign bounty. For thus saith the prophet; *his going forth*, in the dispensation of the gospel, *is prepared as the morning. CHRIST*, with all his precious privileges, *shall come unto us as the rain**.—As freely, as the light shines, or the showers fall. However, if you are acquainted with a different, or a better way, be so good as to communicate your knowledge.

Ther. Some, you may observe, expect salvation, on account of their inoffensive behaviour. They live peaceably.—They do no harm to their neighbours. They are guilty of no gross offence against GOD. And why should they not hope to obtain his favor?—They apprehend, the prophet *Samuel* establishes their hope, when he makes this solemn appeal; *whose ass have I taken? whose ox have I taken? or whom have I defrauded?*†—Nay, they imagine, that our LORD himself has authorized their expectation, by giving this character of *Nathaniel*; *an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile.*‡ A freedom from outward injustice

* Ho. vi. 3. † 1 Sam. xii. 3. ‡ John i. 47.

and inward hypocrisy, is all the qualification applauded in the one case, avowed in the other.

Asp. This negative goodness (if it deserves to be called goodness) was a plea for the empty *pharisee*. But none, I presume, would choose to be associated with *such* a companion, either in character here, or in condition hereafter.

Samuel, in the place you mention, is vindicating himself, only to his *fellow-creatures*, and only in the capacity of a *magistrate*. He speaks not of his justification before the JUDGE of quick and dead. This, he well knew, must be derived from another source, and must rest upon a firmer bottom.

The Israelite without guile, was a person, who not only abstained from every sin, but performed every duty; and without any *wilful neglect* of the one, or any *allowed indulgence* of the other. This instance, therefore, will by no means prove the sufficiency of your negative righteousness. Which seems to have just the same degree of excellency, as a fountain that never issues in water, or as a cloud that never descends in rain.

Ther. In this particular, *Aspasio*, your sentiments are mine.—But I would add *morality* to civility; the virtuous to the inoffensive conversation. And if we not only cease to do evil, but learn to do well: if we use temperance, exercise charity, and keep all the commandments to the *best of our power*, is not this a sufficient foundation for our hope?

Asp. Yes Theron! if, as you add morality to your civility, you add *perfection* to both. Otherwise you must be ranked, not among the claimants, but among the delinquents. You have no title to a reward, but stand in need of pardon.

It is a principle of justice, founded on the unalterable constitution of things, that the debtor be acquitted, when he has paid the debt. But supposing him instead of gold to bring iron; instead of talents to return pence; instead of defraying, to increase the score daily; can he *then* reasonably expect, or legally claim a discharge?

With respect to such an obedience, we may pass our verdict in the figurative, but very expressive language of *Isaiah: the bed is shorter, than that a man can stretch himself on it; and the covering narrower, than that he can wrap himself in it**. It can neither give rest to the alarmed conscience, nor afford protection to the guilty soul. If we have nothing better to plead, we shall not be able to lift up our heads in the last decisive judgment; but *must enter into the rock, and hide ourselves in the dust, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his Majesty.*†

Ther. We will go a step farther, and take in the exercise of *devotion.* We will read GOD's word; pray to his divine MAJESTY; and regularly attend on his public worship.—Here now, are social accomplishments and moral virtues, completed by the performance of religious duties.

Asp. Completed!—I fear, that expression will scarcely abide the test of a single query. Have you then performed all your duties, with that ardent love of GOD, and undivided view to his glory? with that adoring gratitude to the blessed *JESUS*, and that child-like dependence on his SPIRIT; which the nature of things requires, and the scriptures of truth enjoin?—If not; your duties, be they moral, or religious, or both, are far from being complete. Nay; they are utterly defective; and, for that reson, absolutely insufficient for your justification. They are clipped or sophisticated coin. And will that be *current* in the world of glory?

Ther. Allowing them to be defective, they are at least *sincere.* And though not free from all alloy, yet if they bear the image and superscription of integrity, why should they be rejected, as "reprobate silver?"* Why should they not obtain the currency, you mention?

Asp. "Alas!"—says a judicious and admired writer—
"The imperfections of our best services daily *forfeit* the
"blessings of *time.* How impossible then is it, that the
"sincerity of them, amidst so many frailties and defects,
"should *purchase* the glories of *eternity!*"

* Isai. xxviii, 20. † Isai. ii. 10. ‡ Jer. vi 30.

Ther. Be your writer ever so judicious, I can confront him with others, equally capable of judging, and diametrically opposite in opinion.—What says that wise and brave man, the successor of *Moses*, and generalissimo of the armies of *Israel? Joshua*, I am sure, declares himself on my sides *Fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity**, is his last solemn charge to the people.—Even the great apostle, on a review of his ministry, makes it matter of self-gratulation, that he *had his conversation in godly sincerity*†.

Asp. You have quoted the charge, delivered by the servant, be pleased to recollect the protestation, made by the master: *not for thy righteousness*, says *Moses*, *or for the uprightness of thy heart, dost thou go to possess their land*‡. Even an earthly *Canaan* was not given to the *Israelites*, as the reward of their own, either outward obedience, or inward sincerity. Much less can we expect the kingdom of immortality, on account of any uprightness of our intentions, or pitey of our actions.

However, as the doctrine of sincerity is the favorite and the fashionable tenet, I will conform a little to the taste in vogue. You shall have no reason to complain, that I am either a *cynic* or a *stoic*.‖—Let it suffice us to be sincere.—Only let us refer ourselves to the apostle, for a description of this darling qualification. *That ye may be sincere, being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by* JESUS CHRIST, *unto the praise and glory of* GOD.§

Here are three proprietors of acceptable sincerity.—It must bear fruits, *the fruits of righteousness*; and bear them abundantly, so that we may be *filled* with them.—The branch and the fruits must derive, *that* its vigour, *these* their flavour, and both of them their very being, from the all-supporting, all-supplying root CHRIST JESUS.—Then, instead of terminating in self-justification, they must redound to the honor of GOD. It is not said, these shall

* Josh. xxiv. 14. † 2 Cor. i. 12. ‡ Deut. ix. 5.

‖ The cynic had no complaisance, the stoic was quite inflexible.

§ Phil. i. 10, 11.

justify you, but these shall *glorify* your FATHER which is in heaven.

This kind of sincerity, can never be too highly esteemed, nor too zealously encouraged. But this, you will observe, flows from the grace of CHRIST, and issues in the glory of GOD. Therefore does but very poorly attest, either the sufficiency of ***human ability***, to perform good works; or the sufficiency of ***human works***, to win the prize of our high

Ther. Do you then exclude all works? Will you make a mere nothing, both of *our* moral endowments, and of *your* evangelical obedience?

Asp. They are excluded, both the one and the other, from all share in justifying us. Yet not by me, but by an authority, to which there can be no objection, from which there lies no appeal. Speaking of salvation, thus saith the wisdom of GOD; *not of works*—

Ther Works of the *ceremonial* law, I suppose. These, we all acknowledge, are, under the christian dispensation, as a bond canceled, or as an act repealed. But sure you will assign a better office, sure you will allow a nobler character, to that course of obedience, which proceeds upon the obligations of morality; nay more, is regulated by the commands of CHRIST.

Asp. St. *Paul* will allow it no such office, as that for which my Theron is pleading. *Ye are saved*, says the apostle. Ye are delivered from wrath, reconciled to GOD, and maid heirs of his kingdom.—How? *By grace through faith**. *Grace*, like a magnificent soveringn, from the riches of his own bounty, and without any respects to human worthiness, *confers* the glorious gift. *Faith*, like an indigent petitioner, with an empty hand, and without any pretence to personal desert, *receives* the heavenley blessing.

Both grace and faith stand in direct opposition to works; *all* works whatever. Whether they be works of the law, or works of the gospel: exercise of the heart, or actions of the life; done in a state of nature, or done under the influ-

* Ephes. ii. 8.

ences of the SPIRIT; they are all, and every of them, *equally* set aside in this great affair.

Ther. Whence does it appear, that the bill of exclusion is thus extensive, or rather quite *unlimited?*

Asp. From the reason assigned, and from the caution suggested.

From the reason assigned—*For we are his workmanship.* We believers. Of *such* persons, and of *their* obedience, the apostle is speaking.—*Created in* CHRIST JESUS *unto good works.* We are regenerated, and spiritually enlivened, not because we *have* performed them but that we *may* perform them.—Not with any view of being justified by them, but only *that we may walk in them;* till we receive the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls.

From the caution suggested—*Lest any man should boast.* That all pretence of glorying may be cut off from man. Cut off from *Gentile*, from *Jew*, from *Christian*; without any exception, or any difference. Which could not be effected, if either moral virtue, or *Mosaic* ceremonies, or evangelical duties, were admitted to bear a part in justifying sinners.—*Lest any man should boast:* that the whole honour of obtaining salvation, may be appropriated to HIM, who *hid not his face from shame and spitting.* And is he not worthy, infinitely worthy, to receive this unrivaled honour, as a recompence for his unparalleled humiliation?

Ther. All our good works, we allow, are recommended by CHRIST. They prevail for our justification, only through his merits. So that we still depend upon the REDEEMER. And, by this means, pay him the highest honor.

Asp. Depend upon the REDEEMER! no, my dear friend. You act like the persons, described by *Isaiah*; *we will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel, only let us be called by thy name.** Whereas, faith addresses itself to CHRIST, in the very reverse of this language; *thou hast cloathing, be thou our ruler, and let this ruin be under*

* Isai. iv. 1.

thy hand.† 'Tis thine, 'tis thine alone, to retrieve our desperate affairs, and constitute us righteous before GOD.

In Te tota Domûs Spes inclinata recumbit.

Depend upon the REDEEMER! No, you rely upon your own pious acts, and moral qualifications. They, *they* are your grand recommendation. While the office, consigned over to the divine JESUS, is nothing more than to be (as it were) *master of the ceremonies*. He has the credit of introducing your fine accomplishments, with a kind of graceful air.—But is *this* an office suited to his incomparable dignity? Was it for *this*, that he bowed the heavens, and partook of our nature? Was it for *this*, that he became subject to the law, and obedient unto death? *Only* for *this*, that he might usher in our own endowments, with a plume and a scarf?—Surely, Theron, you can never entertain such low thoughts of the incarnate GOD, and his meditorial undertaking.

Ther. Neither can I entertain such *low* and *vilifying* thoughts of our own virtuous attainments. They distinguish persons of eminence and worth, from the sordid wretch and execrable villain; just as the noble faculty of reason, distinguishes the man from the brute.

Asp. To deny good works the merit of justifying us, is very different from vilifying them.—You are going to build a new house, Theron. Pray, do you intend to hew your timber, from the flimsy tendrils of the vine?

Ther. No, certainly.

Asp. Because you don't think those feeble shoots proper, to form the beams, and support the roof, of your intended edifice; do you, therefore, slight them, depreciate them, or disallow their usefulness?—By no means.—They may *beautify* your walls, with their ornamental spread; and *enrich* your desert, with their delicious fruit. This is an office, suitable to the nature of the plant: and from this it receives sufficient estimation, without pretending to the honors of the oak.

† Isai. iii. 6.

Virtuous attainments, I own, are a considerable distinction in the present state of things. And, what is a higher encomium (I shall now out-shoot you, in your own bow) they will distinguish the true believer from the hypocritical professor, even at the great tribunal.—But let them be content with their province, and not intrude upon the SAVIOUR's prerogative. To *effect* justification, be *his:* to *discriminate* the justified, *theirs.*—Neither let them elate their possessors, with a vain conceit of themselves. Who, though they were meek as Moses, holy as Samuel, and wise as Daniel, must confide in nothing, but the boundless mercies of the LORD; must plead nothing, but the infinite merits of his CHRIST.

This is the theology, both of the Psalmist, and of St. Paul. They derive the blessedness promised in scripture, not from the shallow stream of human accomplishments, but from the inexhaustible ocean of divine grace. Blessed is he, who worketh righteousness, and abstaineth from sin, that he may be justified? No such thing is affirmed. But—blessed is he whose unrighteousnesses are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.*

Ther. Will Aspasio then, like many of our modern disputants, *mutilate* the holy word? industriously display, what seems to strengthen his argument; but artfully secrete, what tends to overthrow his scheme? how could you forget, or why should you suppress, the following clause? *and in whose spirit there is no guile.*—Was you afraid, it would demolish your opinion; and point out an *upright, honest* mind, as the cause of this blessedness?

Asp. Far was I, my dear Theron, from any such groundless apprehensions; and equally far from all such delusory designs. *Shall I talk deceitfully for GOD?*† his sacred cause can never need it; and his exalted majesty infinitely disdains it. No: I whould condemn my tongue to eternal silence, rather than speak a syllable, either to conceal, or disguise the truth.

* Psal. xxxii. 1. Rom. iv. 7.   † Job xiii. 7.

Most readily we will admit the sentence you mention: *in whose spirit there is no guilt.* It is evident from the *context*, that these words are not descriptive of an unblameable person, in whose heart and conversation there *is* no iniquity; but of a penitent sinner, whose mouth freely *confesses* the iniquity of them both. confesses, without any reserve, or the least attempt to palliate.—Which, instead of invalidating, corroborates my argument. Since, according to your own allegation, the highest merit consists in a free acknowledgment of sin, or a total renunciation of of all worthiness.

Ther. When we add confessession, and join *repentance*, to all our other works. When we lament our deficiencies and implore forgivness. Surely, this must be avaivable with a merciful GOD, and cannot but entitle us to the happiness of heaven.

Asp. How strange does it sound, at least in my ears, for poor, miserable, guilty creatures, to talk of entitling themselves to the happiness of heaven, by any deeds of their own! when it is owing wholly to GOD's rich *forbearing mercy*, that they have not, long ago, been transmitted to hell: owing wholly to GOD's free *preveling grace*, that they are, at any time enabled to think a good thought.

But not to enlarge upon this consideration.—I would ask, whether those penitential exercises were attended with a hearty detestation of sin, and an utter abhorrence of the sinner?—If they *were;* you would then renounce yourself universally. You would never think of placing the least dependence on any thing of your own; nay, you would even *loth yourself in yaur own sight* *.—If they *were not*: then your very repentance falls short, and is to be repented of. It is as if *one came to the press-fat, to draw out fifty vessels, and there were but twenty.*† It is, if I may continue the prophet's metaphor, *the scant measure; which*, in this your spiritual traffic, as well as in the affairs of secular commerce, *is abominable.*‡

xxxvi. 31. † Hag ii. 16. ‡ Mic. vi. 10

Or, should your repentance be without a failure, and without a flaw; I must still say to my friend, as our LORD replied to the young ruler; *one thing thou lackest.* In all these acts of humiliation, you have only taken shame to yourself. Whereas, a righteousness is wanting, which may magnify the law, and make it honorable.—Should GOD, without insisting upon this, pardon and reward, he whould not act according to his glorious character; nor be at once, *a just GOD, and a SAVIOUR.**—And if you can find this righteousness, *either in the depth, or in the height above;* in any person or any object, save only in the obedience and death of our *LORD JESUS CHRIST,* I retract whatever I have advanced.

Ther. A preacher, and an author, have lately assured us; that we are to be "accepted of GOD, and saved by "our own obedience."—Another has told us; "that a "christian may secure to himself everlasting happiness by "his own obedience."—if these things are true, I need not scruple to repeat my assertion, and adhere to my opinion; that our own duties, especially when accompanied with repentance, are a *real* and *proper* foundation for life eternal.

Asp. If these things are true, the apostle *Paul* was under a great mistake; when, treating of CHRIST and his merits, he ventured to assert; *other foundation can no man lay, save that which is laid, even* JESUS CHRIST.† And the apostle *Peter* (to speak in the softest terms) forgot what he was about, when he so confidently averred; *there is no other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved.*—But the real truth is, such preachers and such authors darken, if not extinguish, the grace of CHRIST. And we are as much obliged to them, for their service; as if they had attempted to sow up the *veil,* that was rent in twain; and to shut the *holy of holies,* which was opened by our REDEEMER's death.

* Isai. xlv. 21. † 1 Cor. iii. 11.

Ther. If you will not credit either of our modern preachers, I can produce a decision, made by one of the most antient and authoritative *Synods; then hath GOD also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life**.—Repentance unto life, is *their* unanimous voice, and *my* unexceptionable voucher.

Asp. I can easily guess the assembly, to which you refer. But I can hardly grant it the venerable name of a *Synod.* It consisted of some *Judaizing* converts, *they that were of the circumcision.* Who adhered, with a tenacious and bigotted zeal, to the *Mosaic* rites.—However, though I might scruple my *Theron's* appellation, I readily acquiesce in *their* determination.

It is not said, those *Gentiles* were penitent, and *therefore* GOD granted them life. This should have been the language of the assembly, in order to establish my friend's way of thinking.--On the contrary, they were *dead* in sin. GOD, of his free goodness, granted them repentance.—which is both the beginning, and a substantial part of *true* life: even of that life, which is founded on justification, is carried on by sanctification, and completed in glory.

I would farther observe; that repentance is a *turning of the heart.* And, when it is repentance unto life, it is a turning of the heart from every other object, to the great and sole fountain of good, CHRIST JESUS†.—Were men slaves to sensuality? when they repent, they are turned to CHRIST, for refined desires and heavenly affections. Were they wont to confide in themselves, and their own works? as soon as they truly repent, they turn to CHRIST for a better righteousness; and thereby, for everlasting acceptance with GOD.—In short; they turn from every false confidence, as well as from every evil way. Ashur *shall not save us,* is their fixed resolution. They look, not to their own tears or humiliation; not to their own duties or graces; but they *look for the mercy of our* LORD JESUS CHRIST, *unto eternal life.*‡

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* Acts xi. 18. † Acts xix. 4 ‡ Jude 21.

Ther. Suppose, it should be wrong, to expect such a vast reward, as the inconceivable glories of Heaven, on account of our own duties: yet, to set them wholly aside; to allow them *no* influence at all; not so much as the *least* co-operation, in turning the scale; this is an excess on the other hand. If the former is *presumption*, the latter is *fanaticism*.

Asp. When Lord *B——n* was shewn a famous quadrangle in *Oxford*; viewing one side, he cried out with rapture; "surely, I am in *Italy*, All is so graceful and delicated!" "Viewing the other side, he acknowledged with regret; "I am certainly in *England*. All is so coarse and heavy!" —When I see the new Testament in every one's hand, and read the articles of our public faith, I am ready to fancy myself in one of the pure *reformed* churches. But when I hear the discourse of serious people, and examine their sentiments, I am forced to confess my mistake. I cannot but imagine, that I am among the backsliding churches of *Galatia*.

Ther. Why among the churches of *Galatia*?

Asp. Because they, like the generality of modern christians, considered the work and righteousness of CHRIST, as too weak or scanty a bottom, whereon to stand before GOD. They suspected it, as a man would suspect the proposal, to venture himself on the waves of the Ocean, in a basket of rushes. They could not bear to think, that all their duties, service, and performances of the law, should be utterly set at nought. Should have no influence at all, in turning the scale—But does the apostle *approve their saying?* no; he declares, *this their way was their folly.*

You are pleased to mention *fanaticism*. A word, which I do not thoroughly understand. Neither is it of much significancy, to enter upon the disquisition of an obnoxious term. I would only maintain; that, on us unworthy sinners; whatever is bestowed by the righteous GOD; is bestowed, not as a debt* to our works, but as the donation

* Bestowed as a debt, is, I must allow, somewhat like jargon. But, perhaps, jargon and inconsistency, may not be without their propriety in this place. As they tend to shew the genius of that doctrine which would connect such contradictory ideas.

of pure *grace*. And if this be fanaticism, I plead guilty to the charge. I glory in my shame.

Ther. I think, it is sufficiently of grace; if we acknowledge good works, to be wrought by the assistance of the divine SPIRIT; and then admitted, together with our SAVIOUR's merits, as a recommendation to the divine favor.

Asp. The *Pharisee* could make his acknowledgements, for the divine assistance, GOD, I thank thee, was his language. Yet, this did not exempt him from the charge of *pride*, nor secure him from the sin of *boasting*.— besides, if good works are wrought by the operation of the divine SPIRIT, they draw a bill upon our gratitude, not upon the bank of Heaven. They render us the *obliged*, not the *deserving* party. To think or teach otherwise, is errant *Popery*,* however it may lurk under a veil of *protestantism*.

You bring to my mind a memorable story.—Two persons were travelling together, in the desarts of *Arabia*.—The one utterly unarmed; the other wore a sword, and carried a musket. As the place was exceedingly dangerous, the latter, solicitous for the safety of his companion, makes him a present of his fire-arms.—Which was no sooner done, than a lion espies them, and advances fiercely towards them. The foremost discharges his piece, and wounds their horrid aggressor. The wound, neither killing, nor disabling, only enrages the monster. He seizes the unfortunate marksman, and is upon the point to tear him limb from limb. His fellow-traveller flies to his succour; snatches up the carbine, which dropt from the other's hand; and fells the ravenous beast to the ground. Then, drawing his sword, stabs him to the heart, and rescues his friend.

The lion thus slain, they take off the skin. Which, he who slew the lordly savage, claims as his own. "No,

* Good works, says a champion for the church of Rome, are *Mercatura Regni cælestis*, the price we pay, or the commodity we barter, for the kingdom of heaven.——Another Zealot of the same communion declares: *Cælum gratis non accipiam*, It shall never be said, that I receive eternal life, merely as a matter of alms.—So speaks he! but, blessed be GOD, we have not so learned CHRIST.

"says his *grateful* friend, as you did part of the execution
"with *my* weapon, I insist upon half of the shaggy spoil.
"I expect satisfaction likewise for the loss of my piece,
"which you broke in the encounter."—To obtain both, he commences a law-suit against that generous associate, who not only *gave* him the weapon, but *saved* the prosecutor from the very jaws of destruction.

Ther. Truly, if I had been judge, I should, without any hesitation, have determined such a cause. Instead of *costs* and *damages* for my plaintiff, I should have transmitted the disingenuous, shameless wretch to the pillory.

Asp. I believe, all the world would applaud your sentence.—Only be pleased to remember, that the procedure, on which you so justly animadvert, is the *very picture* of our excessive unreasonableness; if we presume to write ourselves creditors, and the divine BEING debtor; because, he has delivered us from the bondage of corruption, and enabled us to perform the duties of Godliness.

Theron paused; as somewhat struck by the representation. After a short interval, Aspasio resumed the discourse.

Believe me, my dear friend, salvation, both in the root and all its branches, is *entirely* of grace. Or else believe me, for the many cogent testimonies of scripture; which most circumstantially ascertain this fundamental truth.

Ther. Pray, let me ask, what is the exact meaning, of grace?

Asp. The first and principal meaning, that which I have all along had my eye upon, in our present conference, is, the favor and kindness of GOD; infinitely rich, and infinitely free; entirely detached from all supposition of human worth, and absolutely independent on any such thing, as human goodness.—This is the great origin and basis of our salvation. Not like a fringe of gold, bordering the garment; not like an embroidery of gold, decorating the robe; but like the mercy-seat of the ancient tabernacle, which was *gold—pure gold—all gold throughout.*

Election is of grace: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children, not on account of human worthiness,

but according to the good pleasure of his will.*—Equally gratuitous is our effectual vocation: GOD hath called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his purpose and grace.†—Faith, with all its precious fruits, is owing to the same cause: he helped them much, who believed through grace.‡—From hence springs justification, together with all its attendant privileges: being justified freely by his grace.||—This is the origin of regeneration, and every living principle of godliness: of his own will begat he us by the word of truth.§—The consummation of bliss flows from the same all-supplying source: the gift of GOD is eternal life:** it is, in every respect, a gift; not only without, but contrary to all desert of ours. —So that the foundation is laid in the riches of grace: the superstructure is reared by the hand of grace: and when the top-stone is brought forth, when our felicity is completed in the kingdom of heaven, the everlasting acclamation will be, *Grace, grace unto it!*††

This is that glorious gospel, which human learning could never have discovered; which carnal reason cannot understand; which the envy of the devil, and the pride of man, will always oppose. But which, to the poor convinced sinner, is the very perfection of wisdom. Esteemed, as the joy of his heart; embraced, as the rock of his hopes.

Ther. What say you to the opinion, which *Ouranius* so strenuously maintains? That we are justified not by the merits of CHRIST imputed to us, but by CHRIST himself formed in our hearts. And *Ouranius* is none of your proud or carnal people. His writings are remarkable for their strict piety, and his life is as exemplary as his principles.

Asp. You know, Theron, I have nothing to do with the persons of men, but with the truths of the gospel. *Ouranius*, though eminently devout, may be mistaken. And,

* Eph. i. 5. † 2 Tim. i. 9. ‡ Acts xviii. 27.

|| Rom. iii. 24. § Jam. i. 18. ** Rom. vi. 23.

†† Zech. iv. 7.

if this is his way of thinking, he quite misapprehends the doctrine of grace.

What is written in the oracles of scripture? *The LORD justifieth the ungodly.** What is implied in the maxim of *Ouranius?* HE justifieth the holy, the heavenly, the Christ-like.—A man is justified by faith,† says the secretary of heaven. He is justified by works, says the pen of *Ouranius:* only let them be works of a superior order; such as are internal, spiritual, and wrought by the operation of CHRIST on the soul.—According to this notion, every one is justified by his own love, his own purity, his own zeal. Whereas, an unerring writer has most solemnly declared, that *by* ONE *man's obedience many,* many myriads of sinners, even all the redeemed world, *shall be made righteous.*‡

This notation, I think, is *legalism* in its greatest subtilty, or highest refinement. It disannuls the *merits* of CHRIST; it vacates all *imputation*; and makes our salvation to consist *wholly* in the works of sanctification. Against which, if you remember, I entered my protest, in one of our first conferences. And now having ventered to animadvert on the tenets of others, it may reasonably be expected, that I should give an account of my own faith.—"I am pardoned; "I am accepted before GOD; or in other words, I am "justified; not because CHRIST has put his laws into my "mind, but shed his blood for my sins; not because I *my-* "*self* am enabled to walk in all godly conversation, but "because the LORD JESUS has fulfilled all righteousness "as my *surety.*"

Ther. I am for neither of the extremes. The middle way is most eligible. This is what sound sense approves, and the sacred system authorizes. *Whoso believeth on me,* says our LORD in one place, *shall not perish, but shall have everlasting life.*|| *Blessed,* adds HE in another, *are they, who do his commandments; that they may have a right to the tree of life; and may enter in, through the gates, into the city.*§

* Rom. iv. 5. † Rom. v. 1. ‡ Rom. v. 19.

|| John iii. 15. § Rev. xxii. 14.

Conformably to these texts of scripture, I would neither reject our REDEEMER's merits, nor repudiate good works. As this shady tree, and these cooling breezes, unite their properties, to render our situation agreeable; so those two causes, acting in conjunction, exalt us to the favour of GOD, and constitute us heirs of Heaven.—GOD himself has joined them. And I must urge my remonstrance in our LORD's own words, *what GOD had joined together, let not man put asunder.*

Asp. Would you then make impotence itself a *coadjutor* with omnipotence?—Does this humble the sinner? does this exalt the SAVIOUR?—No: it is a most injurious infringement of his mediatorial dignity. Instead of excluding, it evidently introduces boasting. In consequence of such a scheme, it would be said by the inhabitants of the heavenly world; "thanks to our blessed REDEEMER for " this happiness! yet not to him *only* but to our own righ- " teousness also."

Can you imagine, that the obedience of CHRIST, is *insufficient* to accomplish our justification; must its efficacy be reinforced by the accession of our works? —And what are these works of ours? that *they* should enhance the value, the immense value, of our REDEEMER!—*Maimed, tarnished, worm-eaten* things. Eaten by the worms of self-seeking, self-admiring, self-love tarnishe by a thousand vanities: maimed by ten thousand negligences.—To join *these* in commission, with our divine MASTER's righteousness; would be infinitely more *disgraceful*, than to tack the beggar's rag on the monarch's robe. Would be altogether as *needless*, as to dream of augmenting the sea, by the drops of our bucket.

Ther. Worm-eaten! what reason have you to represent our acts of obedience under this sordid and shameful image?

Asp. I thought, you could hardly brook this disparaging expression. It is somewhat like *petty treason* against the dignity of man. My reasons I must beg leave to postpone, till some other opportunity offers. Then, if you please, we will give the cause a full hearing.

At present, to make amends for this vile slander, I will suppose your works to have *no* defect; nay, to have *all* the perfection, which you yourself could wish.—Will you *glory*, on this account?—You are too modest, I am sure, to avow or patronize such a practice. Yet, if we say or think, "This is the [illegible] nation, and [illegible] though not in the most *explicit* manner, glory.

Or, will you reckon, that these services, because faultless, are, in any degree, meritorious? let us hear our LORD's decision in the case. *When ye have done* not some only, but *all those things which are commanded you*— And where is the man, or what is his name, who, in any nation or in any age, has done all that is commanded?

> Where shall I find him? angels tell me where?
> Shall I see glories beaming from his brow?
> Or trace his footsteps by the rising flow'rs?

Yet even in such a case, if all this were performed, what shall we *say? we are* no better than *unprofitable servants: we have done* nothing more, than *what was our* indispensible *duty to do**. And have, on this footing, just the same claim to honors and rewards, as the *negro* slave, after the dispatch of his daily business, has upon the estate or the wealth of an *American* planter.

Ther. But what say you to those passages of scripture, which I have quoted. You have given them a hearing, but no answer. They, I do insist upon it, expresly *assert* a co-operation of CHRIST's merit, and of our own works, in the business of salvation. By which co-operation, the law and the gospel are preserved distinct. Each has its proper office allotted, and to each its proper honor is assigned.

* Luke xvii. 10.

Asp. I should rather say; by this your co-operation, the law and the gospel are confounded. Each is dishonor; nay more, each is destroyed. When you mingle a white with a black liquid; what is the result? is either of the colours heightened, or either of them preserved? If my comparison seems low or inadequate, let me borrow an illustration from our great philosopher, *Newton*. He somewhere mentions a fine red, and a beautiful azure; which, when mixed, produce no colour at all. The transparency and the glow, which each, in a state of separation, possessed; are, upon their coalition, lost. Such would be the effect of my friend's unscriptural connection.

Unscriptural! no, replies *Theron*. It is the very language of scripture. It is asserted in the book of revelation; *blessed are they, that do his commandments.*—True. But wherefore are they blessed?—Because, the obedience of faith is attended with a real blessedness on earth. *This man shall be blessed, in his doing:** not *for*, but *in* his performance of religious and moral duties.—Because, the obedience of faith demonstrates our title, to eternal blessedness in heaven. It is, though not the *purchase*, yet the *evidence* of our right to the tree of life.

All this I acknowledge. But where, I beseech you, does the scripture join the obedience of CHRIST and the obedience of man, as mutually conducive to the justification of a sinner?—The scripture utterly *disavows* such a copartnership. It asserts, what our homily expresses; "surely, there can be no work of any mortal man (be he never "so holy) that shall be coupled in merit with CHRIST's "most holy act."†—The scripture steadily and invariably declares; that, in this greatest of transactions, CHRIST is not an accessary, but the principal; nay, that he is all. *Be it known unto you, men and brethren, that through this* illustrious and elevated *PERSON,*‡ *is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him all that believe are justified from all things.*—*Through this PERSON*; who, with-

* Jam. i. 26. † Homily on Good-Friday.

‡ Acts xiii. 38.

out any partner or co-adjutor, purged our sins.—*By him*; not by him, and our works jointly; but by him solely. No other action, no other agent, concurring in any degree. This was typefied by the High-Priest; when, on the solemn day of expiation, he went into the tabernacle *alone*; and made the figurative atonement, without any associate.*—*From all things*; by HIM they are *wholly*, as well as *solely* justified. Freed from every charge, whether of omission; or commission; and rendered, not in part only, but completely acceptable.

—To HIM we owe
ALL our deliverance, and to *none* but HIM.†

I hope, therefore, you will no longer consider the supremely excellent *JESUS*, as a *partial* cause of our justification.—What would be the consequence, if the person, who is walking by yonder river, should fix one foot on the solid bank, and place another on the fluid stream?

Ther. He must unavoidably fall.

Asp. And what says our unerring instructor, to those double-minded *Galatians*; who could not believe themselves safe and complete, in the merits of CHRIST alone: but must be seeking some other foundation, on which to repose *a share* at least of their confidence? he says; and they are awful words; they call for my *Theron*'s most serious regard; *ye are fallen from grace* ‡, from the truth and purity of free justification.

Let me entreat my friend, to beware of this error. I think, it is the prevailing error of our times; and so much the more *dangerous*, because it is somewhat specious.—To pour contempt upon the blessed JESUS, with the *libertines* and *deists*, would be shocking to a mind, that retains the least reverence for sacred things. Entirely to set aside the meritorious efficacy of his undertaking, with the *Arians* and *Socinians*, would be afflictive to a conscience, that is

* Levit. xvi. 17. † MILTON, Book III.

‡ Gal. v. 4.

impressed with the least sense of sin. Whereas, to erect our merits on the foundation of CHRIST's; to be found in *his*, yet not renounce *our own* righteousness; this is both plausible to our reason, and pleasing to our vanity. This seems to honor the divine SAVIOUR, even while it gratifies human pride.—But this is an egregious falshood, and cannot stand. This is an abominable idol, and must be laid in the dust. CHRIST, like the *real* mother of the child, will have the whole, or none;* the whole—*unshared*—*unrivaled*—*undiminished* glory of our salvation.

Let me once again entreat my dear *Theron*, to beware of this error. It is the main pillar in the *Roman* heresy, and the master-policy of the *Popish* Machiavilians.† "CHRIST hath merited. that we may merit," is their grand maxim, and their grand delusion. Hence come their penances and their pilgrimages: hence the hypocritical mortifications of some, and the extravagant austerities of others: this enriches their shrines, and fills their cloysters. And to those seminaries of superstition, let it be banished, let it be confined.—*There* let them raise their scaffolding, and try to enlarge the dimensions of the skies. *There* let them kindle their flambeaus, and attempt to increase the luster of the sun. When they have effected this easier task, then will we *protestants* follow their example, and adopt their system. Then will we also think of adding our own righteousness, by way of supplement to the dignity and efficacy—The transcendent dignity and infinite efficacy—Of our LORD's.

Ther. If we are justified by our LORD's righteousness; if nothing *need* be added, if nothing *can* be added to all-comprehending Fulness; what will become of the generally received opinion—That CHRIST obtained for us only a *possibility* of being saved; or put us into a *capacity* of acquiring salvation?

* 1 Kings, iii. 26.

† Man cannot make himself righteous, neither in part, nor in the whole. To affirm this, is the greatest arrogancy and presumption, that antichrist could set up against GOD. —*Homily on Salvation*, Part II.

Asp. It will be discountenanced and overthrown: as extremely dishonorable to the REDEEMER, and no less uncomfortable to the redeemed. When CHRIST procured our pardon, and recovered our title to life; it was all his own doing; all his own acquisition. *Of the people there was none with him*;* none of their works, none of their endeavours, to co-operate as a subordinate cause, under any shape, or in any degree whatever.

Hear his own testimony: *I have finished the work, which thou gavest me to do* †. Should you want an explication of these words, I refer you to the comment of an apostle. *He,* that is JESUS CHRIST, *has obtained eternal redemption for us* ‡. This was his work, and it is fully executed. *He has,* HE HAS, obtained eternal redemption. So that nothing remains for sinners, but to receive the purchased blessedness, and to live as becomes the redeemed of the Lord.

This truth is written, as with a sun-beam, in the pages of the gospel; and sounds as with a voice of thunder, in the songs of heaven. *Salvation to our GOD,* they cry, *that sitteth upon the Throne, and to the LAMB.*‖ Those saints in glory, ascribe the whole—*the whole* of their salvation they ascribe, to the grace of GOD, and to the blood of the LAMB

Ther. Have not many of our most learned divines represented faith, obedience, and repentance, as the *terms of acceptance?* CHRIST, according to this account, procured not the blessing itself, but only the grant of *easier conditions,* on which it may be enjoyed.

Asp. What says that sublime BEING, who gives the most learned divine all their wisdom? *My righteous servant shall justify many.*§ Not pave the way, or adjust the preliminaries, but dispatch *the very* business; *shall justify.*—What says that infallible author, from whose writings all divines ought to derive their doctrines? CHRIST hath

* Isai. lxiii. 6. † John xvii. 4. ‡ Heb. ix. 12.

‖ Rev. vii. 10. § Isai. liii. 11

perfected for ever them that are sanctified.* He has done all that was necessary for their pardon, their peace with GOD, and their everlasting felicity. Otherwise, he were not a complete SAVIOUR. He would not *save to the uttermost,*† if, executing some part only of the grand undertaking, he left other parts to be performed by his people.

The terms of acceptance, for fallen and rebellious man were, A full satisfaction ‡ to the divine justice, and a complete conformity || to the divine law. These, impracticable by us, were consigned over to CHRIST. By him they were thoroughly accomplished; and by this accomplishment of them, he merited for us all blessings. Among others, he merited the gift of faith, the grace of repentance, and ability to yield thankful, dutiful, evangelical obedience. These therefore are but improperly called the terms, which are really constituent parts of our salvation.

To sum up all in a word—The whole tenour of revelation shews, that there are but two methods, whereby any of the human race can be justified.—Either by a perfect obedience to the law, in *their own* persons; and then the reward is of debt.§—Or else, because the surety of a better covenant has satisfied all demands in their stead; and then the reward is of grace.—There is no trimming or reconciling expedient.—You may close either of the two; but no third is proposed or allowed. *

Theron. Was there not a different method of salvation, for the antient people of GOD?

Asp. None, Theron. In the state of primitive innocency, a *perfect* and *persevering* observance of the divine command was the condition of salvation; or rather, of life and immortality. When, by the first grand apostacy, this condition became impossible; a *free* pardon, and *gracious* acceptance, through the blessed JESUS, were substituted in its stead. Which oeconomy, like a fountain of life, was opened; when GOD promised *the seed of the wo-*

* Heb. x. 14. † Heb. vii. 8.

‡ *A full satisfaction;* for a proof of this point, see *Dial.* III. IV.

|| *A complete conformity;* for the illustration of this truth, see *Dial.* VIII, IX.

*man, to bruise the serpent's head.** It ran, like a salutary rivulet, through the *Antediluvian* world—continued its progress, and dispensed its blessings, along the *patriarch* age—flowed, in broader and more numerous streams, under the *Mosaic* dispensation—Is derived down to us, enlarged by the coming of CHRIST, and completed by the ministry of his *apostles*—Will be transmitted, without any further improvements, to the latest posterity. Henceforward increasing and extending, not its perfection, but its influence only. Which it will never cease to do, till, as the fountain is become a river, the river is augmented into an ocean; and *the knowedge of the* LORD our righteousness *fill the earth, as the waters cover the* abysses of the *sea.*†

There was, I confess, a diversity in the administration, but no difference in the nature, of the blessing. JESUS CHRIST, however variously manifested, was the *same yesterday*, is the same *to day*, will be the same *for ever*.‡ As it is the very same sun, which *gleams* at early dawn; which *shines* in the advancing day; and *glows* at height of noon.

My simile reminds us of the time, and leaves a most important doctrine upon our memories. Suppose we take the admonition, and begin to move homeward.

Ther. We need be in no hurry, *Aspasio.* My watch tells me, that we have half an hour good. Besides, I have something farther to alledge, and from a very great authority, which seems directly contrary to your notion.

Asp. Just as you please, *Theron.* If you choose to stay, I am all compliance with your inclination. And, would truth permit, I should be all conformity to your opinion.

Ther. You know, who it is that asks; *what doth the* LORD *require of thee?* and neither of us need be informed, what it is, that the prophet replies; *do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with thy GOD.** But I want to know, what *you think* of this passage?

* Gen, iii. 15. † Isa. xi. 9. ‡ Heb xiii. 8.

‖ Mich. vi. 8.

Asp. I think, it is absolutely inconsistent with *your* scheme. This passage inculcates *humility*. But your scheme is the very reverse of that amiable virtue. A self-justiciary walking humbly with GOD, is little better than a contradiction in terms.

The LORD has said; *ye shall be saved by grace.** Your system replies; " No, but by our own sincerity, and our " own works."—It is declared in scripture; *that the gift of God is eternal life.* It is implied in my friend's doctrine; that this happiness is the wages of our own repentance and reformation.—" My SON shall have all the glory of a sinner's salvation," is the unalterable decree of the MOST HIGH. " *We* will have a share in the honor," is the language of your opinion.—Look, how wide therefore the east is from the West! so remote is such a strain of teaching, from the practice of walking humbly with our GOD.

Ther. But consider, good Aspasio; have I not the prophet's authority for my opinion? are not his words expresly on my side? does he not mention those duties of morality and piety, as the appointed method of obtaining the divine favor?

Asp. He mentions, I apprehend, a solicitous enquiry. To which he gives a satisfactory answer. Then subjoins a practical *improvement* of the whole.—The enquiry is expressed in their words; wherewithal shall I come before the LORD, *and bow myself before the high GOD? shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams; with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my First-born for my trangression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul*?* Justification is the point in view. How shall I obtain remission of *sin?* In what manner shall my transgression be expiated? so that I may appear with acceptance before the righteous GOD?

To which it is replied; *he hath shewed thee, O man, what is good* for this important purpose; namely, the MESSIAH;

* Mic. vi. 7, 8.

pointed out by all thy sacrifices,† and described in the preceding chapter. Atonement for sin, and peace with GOD, are to be made by a better hand, and in a better way, than thou proposest. HE, *whose outgoings have been from of old, from everlasting*,‡ HE, who is the son of the HIGHEST, and yet the seed of her that travaileth;|| HE hath undertaken, and will fully execute, this great office.

And what doth the LORD thy GOD require of thee? what temper, what conduct, what expressions of gratitude, from his people? who are reconciled through the blood of CHRIST, and admitted to the blessings of the new covenant.§—They are to testify their thankfulness for this unspeakable gift, by the alacrity, uniformity, and constancy of their obedience. By the conscientious discharge of every *moral*, *social*, and *religious* duty. Or, by doing justice, loving mercy, and walking humbly with their GOD.

If this be a true interpretation of the text, instead of establishing, it overturns your cause.—But I have another objection to your method, perhaps, more weighty than the foregoing.

Ther. Pray, let me hear it.—I am not so enamoured with my notions, but I can bear to have them censured; nor so attached to my scheme, but I can relinquish it for a better.

Asp. I would illustrate my meaning, by a common experiment in optics. When objects are viewed in a *concave speculum* or in the hollow of a polished spoon, how do they appear?

E e

† The ceremonial law was to the *Jews* a real gospel, which held ... death, and tra... lition of ... the ... eyes continually, as the *only* way of salvation.——BOSTON's *Fourfold S*...

‡ Mich. v. 2. || Mich. v. 3.

§ *Thy* GOD, is the phrase. Which denotes an interest, implies an appropriation; and is the peculiar language of the covenant.—Thy GOD, not made ... by thy humble walking, but by an act of *his own* grace, previous to any obedience of thine.—According to *Ther...*'s principles, the prophet should rather have ... walk humbly (not ... *thy* GOD, but) that he *may be* thy GOD.

Ther. *Inverted.*

Asp. Such is my friend's system of religion. He inverts the order of the gospel. He turns the beautiful buildings upside down; and lays that for the *foundation*, which should only be part of the superstructure.—Not so the apostle *Paul*. He, like a wise master-builder, places CHRIST as the foundation-stone; and rears his edifice of practical Godliness, on that all-supporting basis.—Examine his epistle to the *Romans*. Which is unquestionably the completest model of doctrine, and the noblest body of divinity, extant in the world.

He first discovers the *depravity* of our nature, and the misery of our condition.—He, then, displays the method of our *recovery* by CHRIST, and the blessings freely vouchsafed in his gospel.—After which, he delineates the offices of morality, and enforces them by the most engaging motives. Motives, drawn from the free unbounded loving-kindness of GOD our SAVIOUR, and from the rich invaluable benefits of his grace.—CHRIST and his privileges are the root. From which, gratitude blooms, as the flower; godliness grows, as the fruit.

The same order is observed by *St. Peter*, in his very concise, but very accurate map, of the way to heaven. *Elect, according to the foreknowledge of* GOD *the* FATHER, *through sanctification of the* SPIRIT, *unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of* CHRIST.*—First, the everlasting love and electing grace of the FATHER. Who chooses us not because of, but *unto* obedience.—Then, the enlightening influence, and renewing agency of the SPIRIT. Who testifies of CHRIST; and applies his death to the soul; purifying the heart by faith.—From whence, as from a fountain of living waters, flow true *sanctification*, and every act of filial *obedience*, every kind of real holiness.—All which, being partly defective, and partly polluted, must be sprinkled with the blood of JESUS, and made acceptable by his dying oblation.

* 1 Pet. i. 2.

Ther. Is this the constant method, in which the sacred writers represent the gospel salvation? do they always observe this particular order, in arranging its doctrines and its duties? or, is it not an insignificant circumstance, which goes *first*, provided we take in *both*?

Asp. To observe this order, I am persuaded, is no insignificant circumstance. It is of great consequence, both to our establishment and to our growth in grace. Is it a matter of indifference to the archer, whether he send the point, or the father of his arrow foremost? can he, in either case, hit the mark with equal ease, and equal certainty?

I believe, you will find, that the sacred writers, in all their *evangelical* discourses, invariably adhere to this order. Nay; it took place even under the *legal* dispensation.—When the LORD GOD published his law from mount *Sinai;* when he wrote it, with his own finger, on tables of stone; how did he introduce the precepts? how enforce their observance?—Let us attend to the preamble; which is the language of love, and the very spirit of the gospel: *I am the* LORD *thy* GOD; *who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.** "I have already delivered thee, with a mighty hand, from the most "sordid and insupportable slavery. I have promised thee "for thy possession, the delightful country of *Canaan; a* "*goodly heritage of the hosts of nations.*† Nay, I *myself* "am thy portion; a GOD in covenant with thee; engaged, by an inviolable contract, and with the exertion of "all my attributes, to do thee good. *Therefore,* keep the "statutes, the judgments and ordinances, which I am "now going to establish."—Could there be a more winning inducement, or a more endearing obligation, to obedience?

I might point out the same strain, running through the exhortations of *Moses,* and the songs of *David;* the sermons of the prophets, and the writings of the apostles. But this I wave, not through an apprehension of its difficulty, only from a fear of prolixity.—However, you will

* Exod. xx. 2. † Jer. iii. 19.

not think me tedious, if I produce one more instance, from the great master of our schools. *For we ourselves were some time foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.*‡ Here, he sets before us a dismal, but exact picture, of our depraved and undone condition.—Then he presents us with a delightful view of our redemption, both in its gracious cause, and precious effects. *But after that the kindness and love of* GOD *our* SAVIOUR *toward man appeared; not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to his mercy, he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the* HOLY GHOST; *which he hath shed on us abundantly, through* JESUS, CHRIST *our* SAVIOUR; *that being justified by his grace we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.*—Having thus provided for our happiness; he then promotes our holiness. *This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they who have believed in* GOD, *be careful to maintain good works: these things are good and profitable unto men.*

I make no comment upon the passage: because I hope you will commit it, as a noble depositum, to your memory. Your own diligent meditation, accompanied with humble prayer, will furnish out the best exposition.—Only I would just remark, that the apostle, always consistent, always uniform, marshals his thoughts with his usual exactness. good works are not *disbanded*; nor yet suffered to lead the *van*; but made to bring up the *rear*.—When he mentions these fruits of the PSIRIT, he mentions them, not slightly, as matters of small moment; but earnestly, as affairs of great importance. It is his desire and his charge, that all believers should *be careful;* have their hearts upon the business; should use their best contrivance, and exert their utmost endeavours—not barely to practise, but to *maintain;* to be exemplary; distinguished, and pre-eminent in the exercise of every virtue.—Because, this virtue, and these works, though not the ground of a reconciliation with GOD, are

‡ Tit. iii. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.

amiable in the eyes of all, and *honourable* to the christian profession. They are also a necessary ingredient in personal happiness, and the apparent means of social *usefulness.*

Ther. This view of the evangelical plan is, I must confess, new to me; and particularly your ordonnance of the epistle to the *Romans.*

Asp. If this be new, perhaps, what I am going to advance, may be strange.—We have been talking about acceptance with GOD; and debating, whether our own good works, are the cause of this inestimable blessing. What will you say; if we can perform *no* good work, *till* we are interested in CHRIST, and accepted by GOD?

Ther. Say!—That this is razing foundations.

Asp. It is razing the wrong, the foundation falsey so called. Which will certainly deceive as many, as make it their trust.—And is it not *prudent,* when we are building for eternity, carefully to examine the ground? Is it not *friendly,* to divert a man from the treacherous sand, and lead him to the unshaken rock?—For this cause I said it once, and for this cause I say it again; that we can perform *no* good work, *till* we are interested in CHRIST, and accepted of GOD.

Ther. Produce your reasons, Aspasio. And strong reasons they must be, which are forcible enough to support such an opinion.

Asp. The case seems to speak for itself. How can a man that is evil, do works that are good? would you expect to *gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?* and is not this the character of every child of *Adam,* till he is engrafted into the true olive-tree?—But let us hear, what our *unerring* TEACHER says: *as the branches cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye,* perform true obedience, or be endued with true sincerity, *except ye abide in me.** Nothing can be more express and full to our purpose. But that which follows, is far more alarming and awful to our consciences. *If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and*

* John. xv. 4.

men gather them and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.†—From which it appears, that the human heart is never actuated by *good tempers;* that the human life can never be productive of *good works;* until a man is united to CHRIST. No more than a branch can bear valuable fruit, while it continues in a state of separation from the tree.‡—It appears also, that persons alienated from CHRIST, are, and all their performancs too, like *broken, withered, rotten* boughs: fit for nothing, but to be committed to the flames and consumed from the earth. Both they and their actions, far from being meritorious, are, in the estimate of heaven, worthless and despicably mean.

Ther. What! are all the noble actions, performed by the advocates for morality, and lovers of virtue, worthless in themselves, and despicable before the supreme BEING? Worthless and despicable (grating words!) *only* because they are not attended with the peculiarities of your faith? Can the want of this *little* circumstance, charge their nature, and turn their gold into dross?

Asp. My dear Theron, call not the circumstance little. It is sufficient, were your works more splendid than gold, to debase them into tin, into lead, into dross.—When the poor shepherd brought you, yesterday morning, a present of some wood-straw-berries; bringing them, as an humble expression of his *gratitude*, they were kindly received. But, if he had offered them, as a *price* for your houses, or as the *purchase* of your estate; how should you have regarded them, in such a connection? no words can express the disdain, you would have conceived.—When *Barnabas* presented a sum of money to the apostles, for the relief of indigent believers;‖ it was welcome to the saints, and plea-

† John xv. 6.

‡ This discovers an error, which is often committed, in our attempts to instruct little children. What is more common, than to tell them? "If they will be good, GOD "Almighty will love and bless them."—Whereas, they should rather be informed, "That they are sinners; but, that GOD Almighty has given his SON to die for sinners: "and, if they pray to him, he will forgive their sins, will make them holy; make them "happy; and bless them with all spiritual blessings in CHRIST."

‖ Acts iv. 37.

sing to their GOD. But when *Simon* the sorcerer, offered his gold to *Peter* and John; offering it, not from a principle of faith, but as an equivalent for the HOLY SPIRIT; not in order to testify his thankfulness, but rather to play the huckster with heaven; it was rejected with the utmost indignation.*

I leave my friend to apply the preceding instances. Only let me beg of him to believe; that, if my words are *grating* they are extorted by the force of truth. If I am obliged to blame, what he calls good works; it is, as a great critic blames eloquence, "with the tenderness of a lover."—But my censure falls only on their faulty *origin*, and unbecoming aim. Let them spring from the grace of CHRIST, as their source; let them propose the gloay of CHRIST as their end? then, instead of putting a slight upon them, or giving them a bill of divorce, I would court, caress, and wed them.—Whereas, if neither *this* end be kept in the view, nor that principle operate in the heart; I must persist, in questioning the genuineness of their character; nay, in denying the very possibility of their existence. There may be a *mimickry* of holy actions. But it is mimickry only; empty, as the combs made by those wasps; and unreal, as the flame that is painted.

I have an authority for this doctrine, which I think, you will not offer to controvert.

Ther. What authority?

Asp. That of our church. Who declares, in her XIIIth article; "works done before the grace of CHRIST, and "inspiration of his SPIRIT, are not pleasing to GOD; "forasmuch as they spring not out of faith in CHRIST." —Faith in JESUS CHRIST, *purifies the heart.*† Till this be done, the heart is polluted; the mind and conscience are defiled; nothing, that we have or do, is pure.—It is written; the LORD *had respect unto* Abel, *and to his offering.*‡ First, unto *Abel*; then, unto his offering. The man must be restored to favour, before his duties can be received with complacency.

* Acts viii. 20. † Tit. i. 15. ‡ Gen. iv. 4.

Such a one, you say, is honest in his dealings, temperate in his enjoyments, charitable to the poor. Be it so. Yet, unless these showy deeds are referred to the *glory* of the supreme JEHOVAH; unless they flow from *faith* in the crucified JESUS; they are but the carcass of virtue. They may be acts of worldly policy, of selfish prudence, or *pharisaical* pride. They are no religious service, nor any pleasing oblation to the LORD Almighty.—Nay; instead of being acts of obedience, and objects of approbation, they stand condemned in the scripture, and are breaches of the commandment. They stand condemned in that scripture, which declares; *without faith it is impossible to please GOD.** They are breaches of that commandment which requires; *whether ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of GOD.*†

Ther. Who can believe this, that considers the intrinsic excellency of virtue and virtuous actions?

Asp. Who can disbelieve it, that considers the preceding declarations of scripture? and observes, how GOD has confirmed by his provedence, what he has declared in his word. Behold *Israel after the flesh.* They had, what you will reckon greater than sincerity, *a zeal for* GOD.‡ Yet, *not being according to knowledge*, the knowledge of justification by the righteousness of CHRIST; it was as if they offered swine's flesh, or cut off a dog's neck; affronting and offensive to the HOLY ONE.—Nay; they *served* GOD *intensely*§ and assiduously; served him, the apostle affirms, *night and day.* Yet, not serving him as sinners, redeemed by CHRIST; but rather as righteous persons, who could be their own redeemers; all their toil was unacceptable and unprofitable. With all this parade of services, they were rejected by JEHOVAH, and cast out from his presence, " like an abominable branch."

Upon the whole: shall we submit to the determination of our established church? shall we acquiesce in the decision of our divine MASTER? then we must acknow-

* Heb. xi. 6. † 1 Cor. x. 31.

‡ Rom x. 2. § Acts xxvi. 7.

ledge; that there is no such thing as a good work, till we are reconciled to GOD; till our persons are accepted through CHRIST.—Therefore, to represent our own works as the means of reconciliation and acceptance, is both chimerical and absurd. *Chimerical*, because it builds upon a phantom; and takes for a reality, what has no existence. *Absurd*, because it inverts the natural order of things; and would make the effect, antecedent to the cause. I might add, *idolatrous* also; because it pays to the performances af a creature, what is reserved wholly for the righteousness of our incarnate GOD.

Ther. Before we quit this agreeable retreat, let me ask my *Aspasio*; what he proposes, by running down all those works, which are the produce of ingard religion, and essential to true holiness? whose excellency is displayed in the *clearest*, and whose necessity is urged in the *strongest* terms, throughout the whole bible.

Asp. I am far from running down such works, as are the produce of inward religion; and therefore may be justly styled, *works of faith, and labours of love*.*—But I would caution my *Theron*, and I would myself take care, that our works be accompanied with those circumstances, which alone can render them *truly* good. Let them arise from *faith*, and bear witness to *love*, or else we shall have *thistles instead of wheat, and cockle instead of barley*.†

Perform them, in obedience to a reconciled GOD, and out of gratitude to a reconciling SAVIOUR, then they are genuine, they are valuable. Attempt them, in order to be accepted by your MAKER, and obtain eternal life, then they are spurious, they are pernicious. In the former case, they are like a candle set on a candlestick; in the latter, they are like a torch placed in the thatch.

Ther. In what respects can they be pernicious?

* Works of faith, and labours of love, 1 Theff. i. 3.

† Job. xxxi. 40.

Asp. I will mention two.—We shall never be like the church, *who comes up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved**; so long as we bolster up ourselves, with a conceit of personal righteousness. This was the error, the fatal error of the *Pharisees.* This the film, which blinded the eyes of their mind; and sealed them up, under the darkness of final unbelief.

Besides, my dear *Theron:* If you expect to be saved by your own duties, you will be loth to see the worst of your condition. To see the worst of your condition, will be a dagger to your hopes, and as death to your soul. You will therefore be inclined to *daub with untempered mortar.*† Instead of acknowledging the deep depravity of your nature, and the numberless iniquities of your life, you will invent a thousand excuses, to palliate your guilt. And, by this means, erect a *wall* of *partition,* between your soul and the merits of your REDEEMER. Which will be a greater inconvenience, a more destructive evil, than to cut off all supply of provision from any army encamped, or even to intercept the sun-beams from visiting the earth.

Ther. Now you talk of armies, I must observe; that, though I have scarce been able to keep my ground, in this argumentative action, I cannot allow you the honor of a victory. As a *retreat* is very different from a *rout.*

Asp. I would also remark, that my friend is has changed the intended plan of our operations. Has almost continually acted upon the *offensive.* While my part has been only to sustain the shock. At our next encounter, you may expect to have the order of battle reversed. I shall direct my forces to begin the charge. Put yourself therefore in readiness for a *brisk attack.*

Ther. You act the fair enemy, *Aspasio,* I must confess; in thus giving the alarm, before you make the assault.

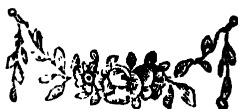
Asp. This hostility may appear *fairer still,* when I assure you, that my weapons aim not at the destruction of your comfort, or the demolition of any valuable interest. Only they would be *mighty, through GOD, to pull down the*

* Can. viii. 5. † Ezek. xiii. 10.

strong-holds of unbelief; and *bring every* self-exalting, every rebellious *thought captive unto* CHRIST.* Captive, in a professed submission to his righteousness, as well as a dutiful subjection to his commands.—And, when such is the tendency of the campaign, it will be your greatest advantage, to lose the victory. It will be better than a triumph, to acknowledge yourself vanquished.

* Cor. x. 4, 5.





DIALOGUE VIII.



THERON.

OUR last conversation ended with a *challenge.* To decline or delay the acceptance of it, would look like cowardice in me, and be a piece of injustice to you *Aspasio.* Therefore, I am now ready to give you all the satisfaction, which a gentleman can demand.—Only as the weather continues hazy, I believe, my *study* must be the place of action.

Asp. A challenge! *Theron*—

Ther. What, sir! do you boggle? would you eat your words, and play the poltroon?

Asp. Perhaps, I may have an inclination to follow the example of a *brother hero;* who ran away from the field of battle, just as his comrades were advancing to charge the enemy. And when called to an account for his behaviour, right worthily alledged; that his retreat proceeded, not from any timidity of mind; no, but from a concern for the public good. " For, quoth he, if they had knocked my " brains out to-day, how should I have been able to fight " for my country to-morrow?"

You smile, *Theron,* at my doughty warrior, and his sage maxim.—But, since you have glanced at a certain *modish* custom, give me leave very seriously to assure you; that, if the affair was to be determined by sword and pistol, I

should reckon such a conduct, a resolute refusal at least, not at all unmanly, but the *truly* wise and gallant behaviour. For surely it can never be an instance of wisdom, to hazard my life, at the mere caprice of a turbulent ruffian; who is a stranger to all the principles of humanity and generosity, but a slave, an abandoned slave, to his own ungovernable passions.—Surely, it can never be an act of real bravery, to expose *my* person; because some fool-hardy practitioner in the fencing-school, is desperate enough to risk *his*.—The gentleman, the true gentleman, should exert a becoming dignity of spirit; and scorn to set his welfare on a level, with that of an inconsiderate and barbarous bully.

Ther. But honor, my *Aspasio*, honor is at stake.—Better to lose our life, than forfeit our reputation. Better to be in a grave, than to be the jest of every coffee-house; and perhaps pointed at, as we pass the streets, for mean-spirited, sneaking, or, as the gentlemen of the sword so *elegantly* speak, white livered animals.

Asp. Forfeit our reputation! amongst whom, I beseech you?—A few rash and precipitate creatures: the pupils of *La Mancha's* knight: the sons of *chimera* and cruelty. Who, by associating the notion of cowardice, with the practice of forgiving injuries; have attempted to bring into disrepute, the *most generous* act of the human mind.—Whose principles are, I say not, a departure from the precepts of religion, but a disgrace to reason, and the reproach of common sense. Whose applause, therefore, is infamy; and their detraction the highest praise they can bestow.

From every judicious and worthy person, your conduct will be sure to gain approbation, and your character esteem. When *Cæsar* received a challenge from *Anthony*, to engage him in single combat, he very calmly answered the bearer of the message; *if* Anthony *is weary of life, tell* him, *there are other ways to death, besides the point of my sword.*—Who ever deemed this a mean-spirited or sneaking behaviour? all ages have admired it, as the resolution of a *discreet* and *gallant* man: who was sensible of his own importance, and knew how to treat the petulant and revengful humour of a discontented adversary with its deserved contempt.

Barely to lose our life, is the smallest of those evils, which attend this mischievous practice. It is pregnant with a long, an almost endless train of disastrous consequences to parents, wives, children, friends, associates, and the community.—It is an infallible expedient, to be deprived of the favor of the infinite GOD, and to be excluded from the joys of his eternal kingdom.—It is the ready way, to become an object of abhorrence to the Angels of light; and be made the laughing-stock of devils, in their dungeons of darkness. *Shame*, everlasting shame, *shall be* the reward of such gallantry, the *promotion of* such *fools*.*

Ther. With regard to this point, I am entirely of your opinion, Aspasio; however I may differ in other particulars.

Asp. Say you so, Theron! would *you* then tamely submit to affronts, insults, and assaults?

Ther. As to the trifling affronts of a peevish incontinent tongue, I would treat them with a superior scorn. When thus treated, they are sure to recoil, with the keenest edge, and severest weight, upon the impotent malice which offers them. The wretch should see, that I could pity his misery, and smile at his folly.—But with regard to assaults, especially those of a capital nature, the case is otherwise. Should any one offer violence to my person, it is at his peril. He would find, and perhaps to his smart,

> Et Nos Tela, Pater, ferrumque haud debile Dextrâ
> Spargimus, & nostro sequitur de Vulnere Sanguis.†

Here, the fundamental and everlasting law of *self-preservation* calls upon us to play the man. And I am sure, *christianity* does not require us, to yield our throats to the knife, or open our breasts to the dagger.

But to retire—to deliberate—to sit down—and indite a *formal* challenge—seems to me altogether as savage and iniquitous, as to assault on the highway.—He that demands my money on the road, or extorts it by incendiary letters, or decoys me into the snare by a forged and counterfeit

* Prov. iii. 35. † Virg.

note; is stigmatized for a villain; is abhorred by every person of integrity; and, when detected, is rewarded with a halter. Why should we reckon the head-strong bravo *less injurious?* Who makes his attempt upon my very life; and thirsts, with insatiable fury, for my blood?

Asp. He allows you a fair *chance;* it is said.

Ther. A chance! of what?—Either of falling a sacrifice to his rage, or of imbruing my hands in his blood. Which is neither more nor less, than reducing me to a necessity, of launching into damnation myself, or of transmitting a fellow-creature to eternal vengeance.—And is *this* an extenuation? *this* a mitigating circumstance? it really proves the practice so inexcusably wicked, that nothing can be pleaded in its defence. The very argument, used to justify the horrid deed, inflames its guilt and aggravates its malignity.

'Tis pity, but the legislative authority would interpose, for the suppression of such a flagrant wrong to society, and such a notorious violation of our benign religion. Why should not the laws declare it *felony,* to make the first overturn for a duel? since it is always more heinous, and frequently more pernicious. Is always murder in the intention, and frequently issues in *double* destruction: the one, inflicted by the stab of violence; the other, executed by the sword of justice.

Might it not, at least be branded with some mark of public infamy, or subjected to a severe *pecuniary mulct?* so that a gentleman of spirit and temper might have it in his power to return the compliment of a challenging letter with some such answer;

"Sir,

"However meanly you may think of *your* life, I set too
"high a value upon *mine,* to expose it as a mark for
"undisciplined and outrageous passions.—Neither have I
"so totally renounced all that is humane, benevolent, or
"amiable, as to draw my sword for your destruction, be-
"cause you have FIRST been overcome by precipitate and
"unreasonable resentment.—You have given me an
"opportunity of acting the gentleman and the christian.

"And this challenge I accept, as a note under your hand
" for five hundred pounds; which will very soon be
" demanded, according to law, by

Sir,

Your, &c."

Asp. But to assume the proper subject—the nature of our enganement. Which I now recollect, and which was explained, when I ventured to give, what you call the challenge.—As it is not my *Ther.* but the obstacles of his faith, and enemics of his felicity, which I am to encounter; perhaps, I shall have courage to stand my ground. And, instead of *violating* all the obligations of equity, honesty, and conscience, I shall certainly, evidence my love to my friend; nay possibly promote his truest good.

Ther. I don't see, how this can be effected, by your late attempt. You attempted to *run down* all works of righteousness, as absolutely unable to find acceptance with GOD, and equally insufficient to recommend us to his favour.—It is for the credit of these, which Aspasio has depreciated, that I enter the lists.

Asp. I attempted to prove, that no human works should pretend to the honor of justifying us, either in whole, or in part. Because—this would be an usurpation of the REDEEMER's office—this whould overthrow the gospel-method of justification, which is by *imputing righteousness without works**—this, instead of excluding, would introduce boasting. And oppose, if not defeat, the grand design of JEHOVAH, in the salvation of sinners; which is, to display the infinite riches of his grace.

When any works are attended with *such* circumstances, I cannot but wonder, to hear them called works of righteousness. I am at a loss to conceive, how they can themselves be acceptable; much more, how they can recommend a transgressor to the favour of GOD.—Nay, I hear our

* Rom. iv. 6.

divine MASTER positively and peremptorily declaring, that they are, not good, but evil. *The world hateth me, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil.*†

Ther. The world—that is, the gentile world, or the wicked world; which was abandoned to licentiousness and gross immorality. Making no scruple to indulge lust or revenge; committing adultery or injustice, or whatever gratified a vicious inclination.

Asp. And can you think, that the SON of the most high GOD, should be sent from the heaven of heavens, only to tell people that revenge and adultery are evil? or does the world hate a person, for inveighing against licentiousness and gross immorality? no, *Theron:* the works, against which our LORD testified; the works, which he censured as evil; were the *very best* deeds both of *Jews* and *gentiles*. Those, for which they approved and valued themselves; in which they gloried, and on which they trusted. This testimony, bearing so hard upon all human excellency, affronted their pride, and inflamed their resentment; as it seems to have enkindled a little warmth in my friend's temper.

However, as you apprehend some injury done to the credit of human works, let us, as we lately promised, give the matter a fair hearing.—What is the standard, to which these works of righteousness must be conformed; and by which their sufficiency may be determined?

Ther. The *moral law*, doubtless; I know no other standard of righteousness, nor any other way of becoming righteous.

Asp. You will, I hope, ere long, be acquainted with another way. You will know, what that meaneth, which is spoken by the apostle; *with the heart man* BELIEVETH UNTO RIGHTEOUSNESS.*—At present, I agree to your proposal. We will join issue on this footing; and try the merits of our cause, before the *tribunal* of the law. Yourself shall be the judge. I will only ask your opinion, and refer myself to your decision.—You see, I am soon weary of the military style. I had obtruded myself on a part, which I

† John vii. 7. * Rom. x. 10.

was not qualified to act; and now resume a more becoming character.

Ther. If you place me on the bench, I shall allow of no such digressions; but shall keep you close to the subject.

Asp. Has your lordship then considered the nature of the divine law, and the extent of its obligations?

Ther. It obliges *all* persons, and comprizes the *whole* duty of mankind. It forbids all immorality, and enjoins every virtue.—Are not these your sentiments?

Asp. They are, when somewhat enlarged.—The empire of the law, as *prohibitory* of evil, extends both to the outward and inward man. It takes cognizance of the actions. It judges every word. All the operations, and all the dispositions of the soul, come under its sacred jurisdiction.—It is indeed a discerner, not only of the working thoughts, but also of the dawning intentions; and arraigns them both at its awful bar. *It pierces even to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit.*† Not the inmost recesses of the breast, are too deep for its penetration; nor all the artifices of the deceitful heart, too subtle for its detection. Other laws forbid the unclean act; *this* condemns the wanton eye, and irregular desire. Other laws punish the injurious deed; *this* passes sentence on the unguarded sallies of passion, and the most secret emotions of resentment. So eminent true is that remark of the *psalmist, thy commandments are exceeding broad* !*—Tell me now, *Theron*, has your obedience been commensurate with this extensive platform of duty?

Ther. If the law be so *very extensive*—

Asp. Nay, my friend, you cannot suspect, that I have stretched, to an undue extent, the obligations of the divine law. Since this interpretation is established by an authority, *too great* to be controverted; *too clear* to be misunderstood; even by the authority of CHRIST himself. Whose sermon upon the mount, is a professed exposition of the commandments; and maintains, in the most explicit manner, all that I have advanced.—So that, if our LORD's

† Heb. iv. 12. * Psal cxix. 96.

exposition is just, it will be neither rash, nor uncharitable to say; there is not a man upon earth, but has broke them *all*.

Ther. Are we all idolaters then? all adulterers? all murderers? shocking to imagine!

Asp. It is shocking, I confess.—But how much more shocking to true religion, and to common sense, if *such* delinquents expect justification by their own deeds?

Ther. This is no proof of your assertion, my good friend.

Asp. To be fond of gold; to be enamoured with the world; to love any creature more than the ever-blessed CREATOR; are instances of idolatry,* not quite so gross, but altogether as real, as to set up idols in our temples, or pay acts of adoration to senseless images. Have you always been free from this *apostacy* of the *affections?*

Our infallible TEACHER has informed us, that unreasonable anger, contemptuous language, and malevolent wishes,† are each a species of murder; and not many removes from the assassin's deadly stab. Have you been always meek, always benevolent, and never chargeable with this *mental homicide?*

We are farther assured, that the indulgence of inordinate desire is, in the impartial estimate of heaven, as the commission of the impure deed.‡ And evil concupiscence, sf every kind, violates that sacred precept, *thou shalt not covet*. Has your will been invariably upright, and warped with no irregular inclination? are you wholly unpolluted with this *adultery* of the *heart?*

I wait not for a reply. I have often heard you *plead guilty* to all—yes, to all and every of these charges respectively.

Ther. Where, and when, Aspasio?

Asp. In the most venerable place, and on the most solemn occasion. And not you only, but a whole multitude of self-condemned criminals.—Our church, you know, has engrafted the decalogue into her public service; and taught all her members to answer, after the repetition of

* Col. iii. 5. Phil. iii. 19. † Matt. v. 22. ‡ Matt. v. 28.

each commandment; LORD, *have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law.* Is there any sense in these words? or have we any meaning, when we utter them? if we have, surely they must imply an acknowledgement of disobedience in *every* praticular.—The criminal arraigned at the bar, never falls on his knees and craves forgiveness, till he either confesses or is convicted. This then must be the purport of our response. "We are "verily guilty concerning this thing. And we humbly "implore both pardoning mercy for the past, and strengthening grace for the future."

Give me leave to urge my question a little farther.—Is there a *single day*, in which you have not transgressed, some way or other, this sacred rule?

Ther. If the law of GOD will dispense with no deviation, not even in the first starts of thought—but surely to affirm this, is to extend the law beyond all reasonable bounds. The motions of evil desire, *if indulged*, are undoubtedly criminal. But are they also, *restrained*, breaches of duty? I should rather imagine, that such temptations are thrown in our way, for the trial of our obedience. which, had they no power over our affections, would not be trials; and, when they are resolutely withstood, cannot be faults.

Asp. What was the judgment of our reformers? and what is the voice of our church? we may find both in the ninth article. "Although there is no condemnation for "them that believe and are baptised, yet the apostle doth "confess, that concupiscence and lust hath of itself the nature of sin." It is not said, concupiscence hath *then only* the nature of sin, when it is ripened into action: but *of itself*, and before it breaks out into the commission of iniquity. *Of itself* it is contrary to the pure nature, and therefore cannot but be condemned by the perfect law of GOD.

Ther. This I can truly plead in my own behalf; that it has not been customary with me to offend; at least not *presumptuously*, or of deliberate wickedness.

Asp. My dear Theron, do not offer to *palliate* your guilt. Such an opiate may stupify, but will not cure; or rather,

like opiates ill prepared, it will intoxicate the mind, and counteract the operation of every healing medicine.—Besides, it is not only pernicious, but false and unreasonable. You know the use of that *solar microscope*, and are able to inform me of its effects.

Ther. I ought to be pretty well acquainted with these experiments; since it has long been my favourite diversion, to employ a few spare hours in such agreeable speculations.

Asp. You have seen the body of an insect, accommodated to the surprising instrument. When, in this situation, the animal was pricked by a very fine needle; your eye, your naked eye, just perceived the *puncture;* and discovered, perhaps, a *speck* of moisture oozing from the orifice. But, in what manner were they represented, by the magnifying instrument?

Ther. The puncture was widened into a frightful *gash*. The speck of moisture swelled into a copious stream; and flowed, like a *torrent* from the gaping wound. An ox, under the sacrificing knife, scarce looks more bulky, or bleeds more largely.

Asp. Don't you apprehend my design?—If *we* short-sighted mortals, and almost blinded with self-love; if *we* cannot but be sensible of our faults; how flagrant must they appear, in what aggravating circumstances, to an eye perfectly pure, infinitely penetrating?

Instead of attempting to extenuate our offences, let us make some such improving reflections.—" If this holy law, " which prohibits the minutest failure, form the indictment; " if this all-discerning GOD, who sifts our conduct even to " the smallest defects, be the judge; and our personal " goodness, which abounds with imperfections, the plea; " what can we expect, at that decisive hour, when the " LORD shall *lay judgment to the line, and righteousness* " *to the plummet?* *—Surely, this consideration should " incline us, to adopt the wise and ardent wish of the " apostle; *that we may* now, in this our day, win CHRIST;

* Isai. xxviii. 17.

" and, at the last tremendous audit, *be found in him; not* " *having our own righteousness, which is of the law*, for the " foundation of our hopes, *but the righteousness which is of* " *GOD, by faith in* JESUS CHRIST."*

Consider the law in its nobler capacity, as *enjoining* whatever is excellent.—Can you hope, Theron, to be justified by it, if you fall short of its demands, not barely in a few instances, but in *every* action of your life, and *every* temper of your heart?

Ther. Such a hope, cherished amidst such circumstances, would be fallacious and absurd.—But I trust, I am not so very faulty, or rather so entirely abandoned, as your interrogatory supposes.

Asp. have you duly examined the *spirituality* of the divine law?—It is styled, an incorruptible picture of the high and holy ONE, that inhabiteth eternity. It is, doubtless, a copy of his absolute rectitude and supreme perfection. It is a bright representation of his *most pure* nature, and a beautiful delineation of his *most holy* will.—It not only prescribes the external duties of righteousness and holiness, but calls for the most upright imaginations and devout affections.—Nay, it insists upon the exercise of every virtue, and that in the *highest* degree. Love to GOD, without the least lukewarmness; and love to our neighbour, without any unkindness; a sanctity of desire, that knows no stain; and an integrity of behaviour, that includes whatever is *holy, just*, and *good*.—In short; it requires us to be perfect, *even as our* FATHER *which is in heaven is perfect.*†

Do any of your actions come up to this exalted standard? are any of your graces thus refined?

Ther. Am I then absolutely *an insolvent*, before the great LORD of the universe? have I no lamb in my fold, that is without a blemish? nothing in my life, nothing in my heart, but what is defective and defiled?

Asp. Indeed, my friend, this is not *your* condition alone, but the condition of the most irreproachable person on

* Phil. iii 8, 9. † Mat. v. 48.

earth. There is *none* perfect, in any character, or in any work, no not one. None that obeys the divine law, invariably and completely. And, before the tribunal of GOD, nothing passes for righteousnes, but a complete and absolute obedience.

Cast your eye upon the names, which are subjoined to those beautiful *prints*. How elegant is the engraving! how accurate are the letters! the strokes most delicately fine! their shape most exactly true!—Let me ask you to transcribe them with your pen; and make the copy equal to the original. Preserve all the noble boldnes of the *Roman* stamp and all the graceful softness of the *Italion* touch.—What? could you not execute this task, even in your skill? how miserable then must you fall short, if your eyes were dim with age; if your hands shook with a *paralytic* disorder; and your understanding was oppressed with a *lethargic* dulness?—Such is really the case with regard to all the children of men. Our nature is depraved; our moral abilities are enervated; and our intellectual faculties clouded. And can we, in such a state of impotence, transcribe that sacred system, which is the very image of GOD—transcribe it into our tempers, and render it legible in our lives, without diminishing one jot or tittle of its perfect purity?

Ther. Though I fall short, there are christians of a much higher class. Christians, I don't doubt, who have these laws written on their hearts; all whose tempers are cast into this heavenly mould. Nor am I myself without hopes of making *more considerable* advances in holiness.

Asp. May your hopes be quickened into vigorous endeavours! and your endeavours be crowned with abundant success!—What you suppose, concerning very eminent christians, I cannot wholly admit, neither do I wholly deny. They may have all their tempers cast into the heavenly mould: but then, they are conformed to the sacred pattern, only *in part*. There is a resemblance; yet not such as that clear and steady mirror (pointing to a fine glass over the chimney-piece) exhibits; but such as some turbulent and muddy stream reflects.——If the breasts of these eminent christians were formed on the model of *Drusus's* house; I verly think, you would have a lower opinion of their acquisitions in virtue.

David, whom GOD himself dignifies with the most exalted of all characters, and styles *a man after his own heart;* who, to a most inflamed love, added a most accurate knowledge, of the divine testimonies; was deeply sensible of the truth, I would inculcate. After an attentive contemplation of the sublimity, the extent, the sanctity of those heavenly institutes, he breaks out into this humbling exclamation; " *Who can tell, how oft he offendeth?** was " the most vigilant conduct, or the most purified soul, exa- " mined by this consummate rule; innumerable would be " found the slips of the former, and glaring would the fail- " ures of the latter appear."

Ther. I cannot see the reason, for *degrading* human nature, to such an extravagant degree; and ranking human works among the refuse of things.

Asp. Do you ask the reason of this remonstrance?—It has preserved us from the mischievous error of the *Pharisee.* Who, measuring himself, not by the *true, sublime,* and *extensive* sense of the law; but by a false, debased and mutilated interpretation; becamehaughty in his own conceit, and therefore abominable in the sight of GOD.—Hear him trumpet his own praise; *I am no extortioner, no adulterer.*† This, the poor vain creature fancied, was a sufficient obedience, paid to the second table. See him still strutting in is own imaginary plumes. *I fast twice in the week; I give tythes of all that I possess.* This, he foolishly imagined, was a due compliance with the injunctions of the first table.—The young ruler, was evidently under the same delusion, when he had the assurance to declare: *all these things*, which are prescribed by the divine law, *have I kept from my youth up.*

A more pestilent opinion, it is scarse possible for the mind of man to entertain. Nor can any thing appear more egregiously mistaken, if we consider the *vast comprehensive* scope of the sacred precepts. That they require an

* Psal. xix. 12. † Luk. xviii.

exact conformity, in every particular, and every punctilio. That they require the utmost perfection of every duty, and forbid the least degree of every sin.

Ther. Remember, Aspasio, what the apostles has declared; *not the hearers, but the doers of the law; shall be justified. The doers of the law*; this shews the possibility of performing its precepts. *Shall be justified;* this proves, that justification is by obedience. This one sentence seems to demolish, whatever you have been building on the subject.

Asp. It is strange to observe, that some eminent commentators have agreed with Theron, in giving the same inconsistent and uncomfortable turn to the apostles's expression. Gravely telling us, that " the doers of the law, " who steadily and uniformly in the tenour of their lives, " act agreeably to its precepts, they, and they only, shall " be justified in the day of final audit and accounts"

This I call *inconsistent.* Because, it is diametrically opposite to St. *Paul's* assertion; *by the works of the law, shall no man living be justified.* * *Uncomfortable;* because, if this was the method of justification, it would shut the door of hope on all mankind.—Whereas, the scope of the apostle is, not simply to shew, in what manner sinners are justified before GOD; but what is requisite to their justification, according to the tenour of the divine law. Which demands, not any performance but a compleat obedience. Discharge with all the heart, and all the strength; without any deficiency in action, or any irregularity of inclination *Such* obedience if any man produces, he shall be accounted just, even by the sentence of the law.—But when did the sun behold such a person? or what annals have recorded such a character?

Ther. Is there nothing valuable then in regularity of conduct, and integrity of heart? nothing valuable, in our acts of charity, and habits of virtue?

Asp. From our *fellow-creatures* they stand intitled to respect, imitation, and gratitude. But before *infinite* perfection, they must drop their claim, and lie prostrate in the dust; imploring forgivness, not challenging a reward. We all discern a beauty and a twinkling lustre in the stars,

when viewed under the shades of night. But, when the magnificent source of day arises, their beauty vanishes, their lustre is darkness. *Such* are human accomplishments, when compared with the perfect law, or beheld by the piercing eye, of the supremely glorious GOD.

Ther. Methinks, this notion confounds the difference of good and evil; and, by rendering all our actions *blameable*, would render them all *alike*. This is levelling with a witness!

Asp. It renders them all equally incapable of recommending us to our MAKER. It says, and so does the tenour of the law, and so does the wisdom of GOD, *I will declare thy righteousness and thy works; that* in the grand article of justification, *they shall not profit thee.** For this purpose, nothing is good, nothing effectual, but the actions of one man, that is CHRIST.

All that we perform, however *specious* it may seem, is very *far short* of our elevated rule. Therefore, cannot procure the divine favor, or intitle us to the kingdom of heaven.—Nay, if GOD should enter into judgment with us, on the foot of our own performances; he would discover such defects, even in the *choicest* instances of our obedience, as must render them matter of condemnation, not meritorious of applause.

Be pleased to observe this penknife—what can be more exquisitely keen, than the edge; or more nicely polished, than the blade? but, how do they appear, when beheld through one of those microscopes?

Ther. The edge less sharp than the woodman's ax, or rather more blunt than his iron wedge. The polish resembles a mass of *coarse* metal, rudely hammered on the anvil.

Asp. How very delicate is the cambrick, which forms your ruffles; and gives such an ornamental air to your whole dress! nothing can be finer, than the threads; or more exact, than the texture. But what is their appearance in a microscopic view?

* Isai. lvii. 12.

Ther. You would take the fine threads for hempen *cords;* and would almost be positive, that they had been *wattled* together, by the clumsy hands of the hurdle-maker; rather than curiously wove, in the artist's loom.

Asp. That lovely piece of enamel, which makes a part of your lady's pensile equipage, quite charms the spectator, with the justness of its figure, and the radiancy of its colours. But—

Ther. Under the scrutiny of this searching instrument, it loses all its elegance; and instead of winning our admiration, provokes our contempt. It looks like a heap of mortar, *plaistered* on by the mason's trowel.

Asp. You see then, Theron, what gross indelicacies, what bungling inequalities, this supplementary aid to our sight discovers, even in the *most finished* works of human art. So, and abundantly more, does the immaculate purity of GOD, discern imperfections in our most upright deeds, and most guarded hours.

Therefore, though the apostle could confidently declare, *I know nothing by myself;* I am not conscious of any remissness, or any unfaithfulness, in the discharge of my office. *Yet I am not,* he adds *thereby justified;** for the LORD is greater than my conscience, and may espy many a failure, where I myself can see nothing faulty.

I said *immaculate;* and I ought to have said more. Angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect, are endowed with immaculate, but the LORD JEHOVAH is possessed of *infinite* purity.—Have you considered this attribute of the GODHEAD, Theron?

Ther. I have; and not without amazment at the charming, the woeful descriptions of it, which occur in the sacred writings.—GOD is not only holy, but, as the lawgiver of the *Jews* very sublimely expresses himself, *glorious in holiness.*† The sacred penman, treating of this illustrious perfection, seem to labour under the important point. They indulge the loftiest flights of imagination; they employ the boldest figures of speech; and add the most glowing colours of

* 1 Cor. iv. 4. † Exod. xv. 11.

eloquence; not without frequent acknowledgments that all the forces of language, is abundantly too *feeble*, for the unutterable subject.

One of the prophets, addressing the KING eternal, immortal, invisible, breaks out into this extatic exclamation; O LORD, *my* GOD, *my* HOLY ONE, *thou art of purer eyes, than* (to *allow*, shall I say? this is an inscription of praises, unspeakably too mean for thy surpassing excellency. Thou art of purer eyes, than) *to look upon evil, and canst not behold iniquity.**—Another, wrapt into a prophetic vision, sees the seraphims veiling their faces, in tokens of profound humiliation; hears those sons of ardour and love, crying, in loud responsive strains; *holy, holy, holy is the LORD GOD of sabbath.*† So transcendently holy, says another devout worshiper, is the everlasting GOD, that all-created glory is totally eclipsed in his presence. *He looked to the moon, and it shineth not; yea, the stars are not pure in his sight.* And *his very angels*, those refined and exalted intelligences, *he charged with folly.*

Asp. Very majestic descriptions!—And pray let us observe the impressions, which such beamings of the divine effulgence made upon the saints of old.—*Moses*, drawing near the cloudy pavillion, the presence-chamber of the HOLY ONE of *Israel*, says, with emotions of uncommon dread; *I exceedingly fear and quake!*—When *Job* is favored with some peculiar manifestations of the omnipotent GOD, see his posture! hear his words! *I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.* How strong is the language! how deep the abasement! When *Isaiah* saw the incomprehensible JEHOVAH, sitting upon his throne; and the princes of heaven, adoring at his footstool; seized with a pang of reverential fear, he cried out; *woe! I am undone! for I am a man of unclean lips!*—*Ezekiel* beheld an emblematical representation of [illegible] who dwelleth in light inaccessible: when the ANT[illegible] of days, veiled under a human shape, appeared to *Daniel*: though one was a devout priest, and each was an eminent

* Hab. i. 13. † Isa. vi. 3.

prophet; yet, overwelmed with a mixture of veneration and terror, they both *fell down at his feet as dead.* And this, not before a full display, but only before a *glimpse* of the GODHEAD. Which, though partial and transient, was too dazzlingly bright for an eye of flesh to bear.

O my friend! my *Theron!* what figure must our mean performances, our low attainments make, before this immensely glorious GOD?—Let us examine the behaviour and spirit of *Job*, a little more particularly. He is one of your favourite examples; and indeed very deservedly. For, in piety, he had no superior, and no equal: *there was none like him in the earth.* Yet, when he has to do with the MAKER of all things, and the JUDGE of all men, he pours out his abashed soul in these very remarkable professions: *if I justify myself, my own mouth shall condemn me: if I say, I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse.*—He declares yet farther; *if I wash myself in snow-water, and make my hands never so clean, yet shalt thou,* O righteous and eternal GOD, *plunge me not in the ditch;* manifest me, notwithstanding all this care and circumspection, to be a guilty and a filthy creature; yea, so very guilty and filthy, that *my own cloathes,* were they sensible of the pollution, *could not but abhor me.*

This he confesses, not because he was conscious to himself of any immorality; but because his mind was filled with the most affecting sense, of GOD's inconceivable holiness, and infinite glory. *For,* adds a venerable sufferer, *he his not a man as I am;* but a BEING of such extensive knowledge that no individual thing can escape his discernment; of such exalted purity, that every spot of defilement is loathsome in his sight. For which reason, it is absolutely necessary *that I should answer him* with reference to my own personal righteousness: *or that we should come together in judgment,* on any such footing, without confusion to myself, and ruin to my cause.

To all this he subjoins, what is still more memorable and exemplary: *though I were perfect yet would I not know my soul, I would despise my life.*—He supposes himself in a higher state, than your most advanced christian; though I were *perfect.* Yet, even in such a state, were inattainable

and attained, *I would not know my soul*; nor dwell upon, nor plead, no, not so much as cherish a thought of my own accomplishment and acquirements. In the important business of justification, they should stand for cyphers; they should be thrown into chains; they should entirely disappear.—Nay more; *I would despise my life*; my life, with all its most shining actions and most distinguished virtues, should be reckoned insignificant and despicable. Just as *insignificant* and *despicable*, with respect to this great transaction, as a wandering spark would be, which is appointed to diffuse day amidst the darknes of night, or to produce spring amidst the depths of winter.

Aspasio, desirous to fix these convictions—which are of the utmost consequence to our faith and salvation—very desirous to fix them on his friend's mind, replied.

Ther. These are alarming hints, Aspasio; I must confess. —A law, which condemns all vain imaginations, and every irregular desire! which requires an *exact* and *universal* obedience, both in heart and life!—A GOD of such majesty, purity, and glory; that men of the most approved integrity, are overwhelmed with *confusion*, in his presence? —I shall consider them, at my leisure, with the attention they deserve.—At present, I believe, opportunity is giving us the slip. Yonder coach seems to be moving this way, and the livery looks like *Philander's*.

Asp. As your visitants are at a distance, give me leave to observe; that the wisest of men, attending to the *first* of these particulars, has poured contempt upon all human excellency; *there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.* The apostle of CHRIST takes shame to himself, on the same account; and teaches all mankind to strike the sail of self-conceit; *in many things we offend all.*—*David*, considering the *latter* of these points, prays with the utmost earnestness; *enter not into judgment with thy servant, O LORD!* and assigns this humbling reason for his petition; *for, in thy sight, shall no man living be justified.* This induced *Nehemiah*, who had been so nobly zealous for the honor of his GOD, not to confide in his own valuable services, but make application to forgiving goodness. *Spare me, O LORD, according to thy great mercy.*

Had I set before you the example of the poor *publican*, who smote upon his breast; durst not lift up his eyes to heaven; but cried from the bottom of a polluted heart, *GOD be merciful to me a sinner! Self-love*, might possibly have whispered; "surely, I am not to be ranked with "that abominable wretch. I stand upon some better "footing, than such an infamous offender."—With respect to the enjoyment of eternal life, we stand upon no better, upon no other. And when *low* as that obnoxious despised exalted saint. They all appear before the MAJESTY of HEAVEN, in the same attitude of unfeigned humiliation, and with the same acknowledgments of utter unworthiness. —For, it is a certain truth, and admits of *no* exception; that, to justify sinners, is not the privilege of human obedience, but the *sole* prerogative of *the LORD our righteousness.*

Ther. Is not the practice of *Hezekiah* an acception to your rule? these, if I recollect aright, are the words of that holy king; *I beseech thee, O LORD, remember how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight.* You see, he puts the issue of his tryal before the everlasting GOD, upon his own integrity and his own obedience.

Asp. These are his words, but they are not used with *this* view. He humbly represents before the great SOVEREIGN of the world, how beneficial his former life *had been*, and how serviceable his prolonged life *might be*, to the best interests of the *Jewish* nation. He appeals to his obedience, not that he may establish his hope of eternal happiness in heaven; but that he may obtain a reprieve from the grave, and a lengthening of his tranquillity on earth.—Neither is this obedience glossed in, by way of merit; but only pleaded, by way of argument: as though he had said; "*remember*, gracious GOD, how I have exerted "my royal authority, to suppress idolatry, to extirpate "vice, and to promote thy true religion. *Consider*, how "greatly thy people stand in need of such a vigilant and "zealous governor; and to what a miserable condition "both church and state may be reduced, if thou takest "away thy servant by this threatened but untimely stroke.

" and, for the welfare of *Judah*, for the honor of thy " name, for the support of thy own worship, *O spare me a little!*"

Aspasio paused; expecting a reply.—As *Theron* continued silent and musing, *Aspasio*, with a smile of benevolence, proceeding.—Come, my *Theron;* why so deep in thought? have you any objection to the evidences I have produced?—They are some of the most *dignified* characters, and *illustrious* personages, that could be selected from all ages. Kings, princes, and patriots! priests, saints, and martyrs! should these be deemed insufficient, I can exhibit a larger and nobler cloud of witnesses—*larger*, for they are a great multitude, which no man can number, of all nations and kindreds, and people, and tongues—*nobler*, for they stand before the throne, and before the LAMB, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands.—Ask those shining armies, who they are and whence they came? their answer is comprised in one of my favourite portions of scripture: one of those delightful texts, from which I hope to derive consolation even in my last moments. For which reason, you will allow me to repeat it, though it may perhaps be mentioned in a former conversation. *We are they, who came out of great tribulation; and have washed our robes, and made them white in the blood of the LAMB: therefore are we before the throne.**

Some of them laid down their lives for the sake of CHRIST; many of them were eminent for works of righteousness; all of them were endued with real holiness. Yet, none of these qualifications constituted their *passport*, into the regions of endless felicity. They had *washed their robes;* had fled to the atonement, and pleaded the merits of JESUS their SAVIOUR—hereby they had *made them white;* this was the cause of their acquittance from guilt, and their complete justification—and *therefore* on this account, their persons were acceptance; they were presented without spot before the throne; and admitted to

* Rev. vii. 14.

that fulness of joy, which is at GOD's right-hand for evermore.

Ther. I have no objection to your witnesses. But, methinks, your doctrine is strangely *debasing* to human nature.

Asp. A sign Theron, that it is agreeable to the spirit and intention of the *gospel.* Which is calculated, as the eloquent *Isaiah* foretold, to humble the sinner, and exalt the SAVIOUR; † *The loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low, and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day:* * " Man, though naturally " vain, shall be made sensible of his numberless offences; " shall acknowledge the defects, which attend his highest " attainments; shall confess the impossibility of being " justified by the deeds of the law; and place all his hope " upon the propitiatory death, and meritorious obedience, " of the LORD JESUS CHRIST."

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† This corresponds with a very valuable maxim, which an eminent Divine once recommended to his people, as a touch-stone to distinguish *evangelical* truth.—That doctrine, he said, which tends

To humble the sinner;
To exalt the SAVIOUR;
To promote holiness;

That doctrine, which tends to accomplish *all* these designs, you may embrace as sound. That which is defective in its influence on *any one* of them, you should reject as corrupt

* Isai. ii. 11.



DIALOGUE IX.



THERON, impressed with the last conversation, was very desirous to resume the subject, and renew the important debate. With this view, he conducted his friend into a retirement, commodious for the purpose.

They enter a spacious *lawn*; which lay opposite to the house, and opened itself in the form of an expanded fan. The mounds, on either side, were dressed in verdure; and ran out in a slanting direction. The whole, to an eye placed at a distance, bore the resemblance of a magnificent *vista*; contracting, by slow degrees, its dimensions; and lessening, at last, into a point. Which, the regular and graceful seat, with all imaginable dignity, supplied.

Nature had sunk the lawn into a gentle *decline*. On whose ample sides, were oxen browzing, and lambs frisking. The lusty droves lowed, as they passed; and the thriving flocks, bleated welcome music in thy master's ear. —Along the midst of this vardent slope, was stretched a spacious and extensive *walk*. Which, coated with gravel and fenced with pallisadoes, looked like a plain stripe of brown, intersecting a carpet of the brightest green.—At the bottom, two handsome *canals*, copiously flocked with fish, sometimes floated to the breeze; sometimes stood unmoved "pure as the expanse of heaven." The waters, beheld from every room in the house, had a fine effect upon the sight; not without a refresh influence on the imagination.

—At the extremity of one, was planted a stately *colonade.* The roof, elevated on pillars of the *Ionic* order; the area slabbed with stones, neatly ranged in the diamond-fashion, several forest-chairs accommodated the anglers with a seat; while the bending dome supplied them with a shade.

Corresponding, and on the margin of the other canal, was erected a *summer-house*, of a very singular kind.—The lower part had an opening towards the north; it was cool; it was gloomy; and had never the sun. It carried the romantic air of a *grotto*, or rather the pensive appearance of an *hermit's cell.* The outside was coarse and rugged with protuberant stones. Partly over-spread with ivy, partly covered with moss, it seems to be the work of antient years. You descend, by steps of turf; and are obliged to stoop as you pass, the door. A scanty iron gate, with certain narrow slits in the wall, transmit a glimmering light; just sufficient to discover the inner structure. which appears, like one continued piece of rockwork; a cavern cut from the surrounding quarry.

—*Above*, hung an irregular arch; with an aspect, that seemed to presage a fall, and more than seemed to alarm the stranger. *Below*, lay a paving of homely pebbles; in some places; a little furrowed; as though it had been worn by the frequent tread of solitary feet. *All* around, were rusticity and solemnity; solemnity, never more visibly seen, than through a gloom.—The furniture, of the *grotesque* fashion, with the apartment. A bench hewed, you would suspect, by nature's chizzel, out of the solid stone. A sort of couch, composed of swelling moss, and small fibrous roots.—From one corner, trickled a pure spring: which crept, with a babbling moan, along the channeled floor; till its current was collected into a bason, rudely scooped from the ground. On the edge of this little receptacle, lay chained a rusty bowl; and over it, stood an antique worm-eaten table.—On the least obscure part of the wall, you discern, *dimly* discern, a parchment scroll; inscribed with that sage, but mortifying admonition; VANITY OF VANITIES! ALL IS VANITY!

Over this recess, so pleasingly horrid, and adapted to solemn musings, arose an open and airy *belvidere.* You

ascend by winding stairs; and, coming from the *uncouth* abode below, are sweetly surprised with an *elegant* hexagon.—The cieling lofty, and decorated with the softest, richest, almost flowing fret-work. The wainscot, in large pannels of oak, retained its native auburn: so beautifully plain, that, like an amiable countenance, it would have been disfigured, rather than improved, by the most costly paint. On this were disposed, in gilded frames, and to great advantage, a variety of entertaining *landscapes*. But none surpassed, none equaled, all were a foil to, the noble lovely views, which the windows commanded.—The chimney-piece, of white shining marble, streaked with veins of vivid red. Over it was carved a fine festoon of artificial, in it, was ranged a choice collection of natural flowers.—On a table of glossy walnut, lay a portable telescope; attended with *Thompson's Seasons*, and *Vanierii Prædium Rusticum* *.

The whole was fitted up in the highest taste, and furnished with every pleasurable ornament. On purpose to harmonize with that *lavish gaiety*, which seemed to smile over all the face of nature. On purpose to correspond with that *vernal delight*, which came breathing on the wings of every fragrant gale. I may add, on purpose to remind the beholder of those *immortal mansions*, which are decorated with images infinitely more splendid, with objects unspeakably more glorious. Where holy beings will spend, not a few vacant hours in refined amusement, but a boundless eternity in the consummation of joy.—For, to a well-turned mind, nature is a preceptor; and these are her instructive lessons. To the pure in heart, even sense is edifying; and these are its delicate moralities.

The redundant waters of the canal, rolled off in a spreading *cascade*. Which, tumbling from many a little precipice, soothed the air with a symphony of soft and gurgling sounds. Nor ever intermitted the obliging office,

* *Vanierii Prædium Rusticum*.—A most elegant *Latin Poem*: which treats of every remarkable peculiarity, relating to the business of a country life, or the furniture of a country seat.—It entertains the imagination with a description of the most *agreeable* objects, in an easy flow of the finest language, and most harmonious numbers.

From morn to noon, from noon to dewy eve.

But, when the fanning breezes dropt their wings; when the feathered choir were hushed in sleep; when not so much as a chirping grashopper, was heard throughout the meads; this liquid instrument still played its *solo:* still pursued its busy way, and warbled, as it flowed, melodious murmurs.

Asp. Such, *Theron;* so uniform, uninterrupted, and invariable, should be our conformity to the precepts of the law.—But alas! those sacred precepts are so *exceedingly broad,* that the most enlarged human obedience, is far from being commensurate to their extent; so *absolutely holy,* that our highest attainments fall vastly short of their exalted perfection.—How then can we expect justification, from such a consummate rule? how dare we place any dependence, upon such imperfect duties?

When you was pleading for such a method of justification, you put me in mind of the Consul *Mummius.* I could not but think of those memorable orders, which he gave the merchant, who undertook to convey his fine *Grecian* statutes to Rome.

Ther. Instead of the Consul, you should have said the clown *Mummius.* No clown ever discovered a more gross and indelicate taste, than that illustrious booby. For any one to talk of making new *antiques* *, was folly and nonsense to the last degree. But it is equally absurd, for us to talk of regaining and securing the favor of GOD, by our repentance, our reformation, our holy duties?

Asp. I see very little odds in the case, truly. Because. the means, which you would use, are impracticable; and the end, at which you aim, is unattainable; unless

———————One greater man
Restore us, and regain the blissful seat.

Milton, you observe, had no notion of man's restoring himself; or regaining the favor of GOD, by his own reforma-

* *Mummius* was General of the *Roman* army; and on account of his signal victories in *Achaia,* surnamed *Achaicus.* Though a succesful warrior, he was no very acute connoisseur.

tion. Such an attempt, according to his way of thinking, were somewhat like the conceit of making *new antiques.*— What hand could give us *Jupiter*, in all his commanding Majesty, but the hand of *Phidias?* what pencil could shew us *Venus*, in all her attractive beauty, but the pencil of *Apelles?* much more may we ask; what obedience could equal the perfection of the divine law, but the obedience of CHRIST? or what expedient can reconcile sinners to their offended GOD, but only the blood and righteousness of his beloved SON?

Ther. Pray, let me ask in my turn—Because mankind are incapable of pleasing their MAKER, by yielding an *absolute* and *invariable* obedience to the moral law; does it follow from thence, that they cannot render themselves acceptable to him, by an universal course of sincere obedience?

Asp. I think it follows from what has been already observed. If you desire new arguments, they are at hand.

The law, says the teacher of the *Gentiles*, *is the ministration of death* * How can this be true, if it requires no more than a *sincere* obedience; such as is proportioned to our infirm state? If this be sufficient to justify, and entitle us to our CREATOR's favor; the law ceases to be the ministration of righteousness.

The law is styled, by the same inspired teacher, *a school master to* bring us to *CHRIST* †. How can it, upon your supposition, be qualified for such an office? if a sincere obedience be the whole of its demands, it can no longer deliver us over us over to a REDEEMER's merit; but must engage and attach us to *itself*. Teaching us to look upon its precepts, and our own conscientious observance of them, as the tenure of eternal life.

Do you insist upon a third proof? a third presents itself. Not so much founded on argumentation, as reduced from

* 2 Cor. iii. 7. In this place, I apprehend, the Apostle means the moral law, and that principally. As that alone was written and engraven on stones. Elsewhere, I believe, he uses the word in a larger sense; and intends to exclude all law whatever, from bearing any share in our justification.

† Gal. iii 24.

example.—How was *Abraham* *, the friend of GOD, and father of the faithful, justified? by a course of sincere, or by many acts of heroic obedience? no; but by faith in the promised MESSIAH. *Abraham worked not*, with a view to obtain justification; *but believed on him, who justifieth the ungodly.*—How was *David* *, the man after GOD's own heart, justified? by his zeal for his CREATOR's glory, or by his eminent services to his fellowcreatures? no; but by a righteousness imputed: even that rightousness of the blessed REDEEMER, through which *iniquity is forgiven, and sin pardoned.*—And can we be said to walk humbly, or can we be thought to walk surely, if, refusing to tread in the steps of these exemplary saints, we divert into a path of our own devising?

Ther. "Of our own devising!"—No, my friend: there is a *milder* law introduced by the gospel, condescending and merciful to our infirmities, which accepts of sincerity instead of perfect obedience.

Asp. When was this milder law introduced, and the stricter abrogated?—Not upon the entrance of sin, I presume. At this rate, the original law must be the creature of a *few days*, perhaps a *few hours* only. But can we imagine, that the all-wise and unchangeable GOD would ordain a system of precepts, to be disannulled, as soon as enacted? not in our LORD's time, I am very certain.—That holy commandment, which requires *supreme* love to GOD, and *perfect* charity to men, he assures us, was still in force.† Nay, it is evident, from the nature of the DEITY, and from our relation to one another, that it always will be in force; that it never can cease; but is necessary and everlasting.

"A milder law, condecending to our infirmities"—What can be the purport of such an institution? it must be supposed to speak the following language! "Be it "known unto you, O children of *Adam*, that you are no

* These two examples are, with the greatest judgment selected, and with the utmost propriety app[illegible] *Rom.* iv. 6, &c.

† Matt xxii 37, 38, 39.

" longer enjoined to love the LORD with all your
" strength, nor to love your neighbour as yourselves.—
" *Once*, indeed, I insisted upon absolute purity of heart;
" *now* I can dispense with some degree of evil concupi-
" scence.—Since *CHRIST* is come, and his gospel preach-
" ed, you need not always be clothed with humility; but
" may feel some little emotions of pride.—In short; be-
" cause you are *weak*, I will *connive*; or even accommo-
" date my demands to your enfeebled and depraved con-
" dition."

Not to urge (what must be shocking to every ear) that such a doctrine would make the HOLY ONE of GOD, a minister of sin; and the gospel of our salvation, a patent for licentiousness. Let me only ask—Does this agree with our LORD's declaration? *One jot or tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled* *.—Is this suitable to the perfections of the divine LEGISLATOR? *With whom is no variableness, nor shadow of turning?* †—Will this consist with the avowed resolution of the Almighty JEHOVAH? *He will magnify the law, and make it honorable* ‡.

Ther. However you may decry, what I call the milder law, St. *Paul* asserts it to be the *Christian* scheme. This he strenuously argues for, as the only scheme by which any man can be justified in the sight of GOD.

Asp. Does he *Theron?* In what epistle? what chapter? what verse?—He says, addressing himself to the *Galatian* converts; *I do not frustrate the grace of GOD; for if righteousness came by the Law, CHRIST is dead in vain* ||. From which passage, we learn two very momentous truths. That, were we to derive a justifying righteousness from the law, this would not only be *derogatory* to the honor of grace, but *subversive* of its very being.—That by seeking justification through our own conscientious behaviour, we make, as far as in us lies, the death of *CHRIST* a *vain* thing; for which there was no occasion, and of which there is no use.

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* Matt. v. 18. † Jam. i. 17. ‡ Isa. xlii
|| Gal. ii. 21.

To the same purpose it is written in that invaluable epistle to the *Romans*;* *if they which are of the law be heirs;* if they, who trust to their own performances of the law, are thereby entitled to the heavenly inheritance; *faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect.*—See now, my friend, the tendency of your opinion! It is not a mere speculative mistake; an error of inconsiderable consequence; but such as strikes at the fundamentals of the gospel. Instead of being the only *Christian* scheme, it totally overthrows *Christianity* itself. For it would render the promise abortive, and supersede the necessity of faith. It would destroy the very existence of grace, and make even the death of CHRIST a superfluous transaction.

Ther. This I see, Aspasio; that the method of obtaining acceptance on account of our own sincerity, is a benign expedient; such as corresponds with the compassionate nature of the DEITY; and is, what the Apostle styles, *being justified by faith, without the deeds of the law.*

Asp. How! to be justified by sincerity, the *same* thing! —Is it possible?—Let me illustrate my query by a similitude, which our present situation suggests. Sometimes an easy comparison is more convincing, than a laboured argument.

From this pleasing eminence, we command an extensive view of the country. Our eye connects the artless grandeur of nature, with the elegant embellishments of the summer-house. Nor is the public road the least entertaining part of the scene. Because it presents us with a moving picture; with a perpetual succession of new objects.—How many travellers have passed in review, since we took our seat in this agreeable elevation! Just at this instant, a stage coach bolts out of the lane: filled, I suppose, with passengers, that reside in the neighbourhood, or are to lodge in the next market town. We will suppose them set down at their journey's end. An acquaintance visits them: congratulates them on their arrival: and asks that customamary question, How they came?"—" We came, say they

* Rom. iv. 14.

"without walking as far as we were able."—Is this answer intelligible? are these sentiments consistent? so intelligible is my friend's doctrine. So consistent is justification, vouchsafed *without* the deeds of the law: and justification obtained, by performing the deeds of the law, *as well* as we are able.

Ther. Without the law, signifies, without the necessity of an exact and unerring conformity to it.

Asp This is not *without*, but *by* the law, qualified in the rigour of its demands, and departing somewhat from the perfection of its precepts. Could you affirm, with any propriety, that this part of the hemisphere is *without the sun?* because, an intervening cloud has moderated its fervour, and abated its glare.

What says the Apostle? his words in another place, will determine his meaning in this. If a state of acceptance with GOD, be *of works;* be referable to our own obedience, whether sincere or perfect: *it is no more of grace* *; no more the effect of free favor, but a recompense owing to worth.—Works and grace, in point of justification, are irreconcilable opposites. On this pinnacle they cannot stand together. One must supplant and overthrow the other.

But why do I speak of grace? if my friend's opinion prevail, grace is at an end. What we took to be the gospel, turns out a covenant of works. Salvation ceases to be a free gift, and becomes a necessary payment. For, *to him that worketh*, that performeth what the law requires, *is the reward not reckoned of grace; but* he may claim it, as his due; it must be paid him, as matter *of debt.*

Ther. You take no notice of what I urged, concerning the *benignity* of this scheme; and how much it magnifies the clemency of the great LEGISLATOR.

Asp. But why should clemency erect its throne, on the ruin of every other attribute?—This method would dishonor the veracity of GOD; which has denounced a curse, upon every deviation from his revealed will.—It would de-

* Rom. xi. 6.

preciate the *administration* of his justice; which cannot but punish, whatever violates his sacred precepts.--It would greatly derogate from the dignity of his law; and make it a mere thing of wax. To bend, and truckle; and take its form, from the sin and weakness of human nature.

Ther. Will the divine law then make no favorable allowances for human infirmities, for constitutional faults and strength of passion.

Asp. Far be it from me to represent the law of the MOST HIGH, either more strict, or more yielding, than it really is. To avoid all possibility of such a mistake, let us hear the declaration of the law itself. *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things, which are written in the book of the law to do them* *.

Every one; without any exception of persons; without any regard to please, either of human weakness, or violent temptation.—*That continueth not;* it is not enough to observe these holy commandments, in the general tenor of our conversation. Our course of obedience must be without any intermission; from the earliest dawn of reason, to the latest period of life.—*In all things;* we must refrain from all the sins, that are forbiden, and from every approach towards them. We must practice all the virtues, that are enjoined, and in their full extent of perfection.

In a word; the law insists upon obedience, perfect in its *principle;* perfect in all its *parts;* perfect in every *degree;* and in each of these respects *perpetual.*—The least deficiency in any one particular, renders us liable to vengeance; and notwithstanding any sorrow for transgressions, notwithstanding all pretensions to sincerity of heart, consigns us over to the curse.

Theron paused—he seemed struck with surprise.—But rallying his thoughts replied.—According to your interpretation, this is the language of the law; Cursed is every one that is not *perfectly* righteous. But if *this* be the sense of the passage, who of all flesh can be saved?

* Gal. iii.

Asp. Say rather; if the demands of the divine law are so wonderfully high; if its sanction is so awfully rigorous; then must every mouth be stopped—then is all the world become guilty before GOD—and, *by the works of the law shall no man living be justified.*

Ther. "Cursed is every one, that is chargeable with the "least sin; that is not perfectly righteous." I am astonished at the thought! how wretched then is the state of mankind!

Asp. Extremely wretched. And so much the more, because they are folding their hands in a listness and gay insensibility; when they should be lifting them up to GOD, for deliverance from the wrath to come. Because they are sleeping in a false security, or dreaming in presumptuous hope; while they should be flying to the strong-hold, and escaping for their life; even for the life of their immortal souls.

The state of mankind is most truly described by the prophet. The curse of GOD, like *a* tremendous *fire is kindled* all around them; *yet they know it not; it burns,* fiercer than ten thousand fiery furnaces, *yet they lay it not to heart.**—O! that the terrors of the LORD, and the voice of conscience, may awaken them, may rouse them before it be too late!

Ther. Will not such excessively seeere doctrine drive people to despair?.

Asp. It may. It ought.—This, I apprehend, increases your astonishment.—But allow me to explain myself. A despair I mean, of being reconciled to the almighty GOD, and of obtaining eternal happiness, by any satisfaction or any duties of our own. This despair is the prelude to heavenly hope, and holy joy. The gospel is a gracious provision, made by the supreme royal prerogative, for such desperate souls. In this despair, I am willing to live, and desirous to die.

Ther. Now you mention *willing*, how can you forget that gracious manifesto, published by the condescending

* Isai. xlii. 25.

KING of heaven; *if there be first a* willing *mind, it is accepted, according to what a man hath, not according to what he hath not.** Is it not plain from this text, that infinite goodness will admit our honest, though imperfect endeavours? and, since we are not able to pay an *unsinning*, will mercifully accept our *best* obedience?

Asp. I do not forget, but possibly my friend may misapply the gracious manifesto.—To whom was the word of this consolation sent? to true believers; who *were established in* CHRIST†; *were sanctified in* CHRIST‡; *and abounded in faith*‖.—If you likewise, my dear Theron, acknowledge your self a vile sinner in your worst, and an unprofitable servant in your best estate: if, in consequence of this acknowledgment, you fly for refuge to the wounds of a crucified SAVIOUR; and rely, for salvation, only on his obedience unto death: then, you imitate those *Corinthian* converts. Then you may apply that indulgent declaration to yourself. And then would I venture to address you, in the elegant and chearing language of the royal PREACHER; *go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for GOD* now *accepteth* § both thy person, and thy performances.

But, if you overlook the righteousness of the bless[ed] JESUS; if you depend upon yourself and your ow[n at]tainments; you are (how shall I speak it!) not acce[pted] but accursed. In such a case, you have already [heard] your doom denounced, by the leader of the *Jews*. [You] may hear it ratified, by the apostle of the *Gentiles*. *As many as are of the works of the law,* who seek justification by their own observance of its commands, *are under the curse*.

Ther. Under the curse? not because we presumptuously transgress; only because, our attempts to obey, though faithfully exerted, are attended with defects? is not this unreasonable and shocking?—unreasonable, that the GOD

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* 2 Cor. viii. 12. † 2 Cor. i. 21. ‡ 1 Cor. i. 2. ‖ 2 Cor. viii. 7.

§ Eccles. ix. 7.

of justice should establish a law of such consummate perfection, as no child of *Adam* can, even with his utmost assiduity and care, fulfil? *shocking*, that the GOD of mercy should thunder out so severe a denunciation, on the least inadvertent breach, on every unavoidable failure?—This exceeds the relentless rigour of *Draco*, or the tyrannical impositions of the *Ægyptian* task-masters. *Draco*, is said to have written his laws in blood. Yet his institutions, though very difficult to be observed, were not absolutely impracticable. And, though the *Ægyptian* task-masters insisted upon the full tale of bricks, without allowing the full proportion of straw, yet the punishment they inflicted, was incomparably less than everlasting destruction.

Asp. The *least* breach!—You take it then for granted, that some violations of duty are small and inconsiderable. But this extent and severity of the divine law, concur to correct every such mistaken apprehension. They inform us; that those sins, in which the light of nature could discern but little turpitude; that those sins of which the voice of reason would be apt to say, *is it not a little one?* even those sins are unspeakably odious, and intolerably loathsome, in the eye of JEHOVAH. His nature is so pure, and his will so righteous, that he cannot away with any sin; he will not spare any transgression; but pronounces a curse, even the curse of everlasting condemnation, upon all iniquity.—This bespeaks purity and a justice worthy of GOD; great, transcendent, and deeply to be revered. Made sensible of this, we shall cry out with the psalmist; *my flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgments.*

But this severity, you imagine, clashes with the lovely attribute of mercy.—If GOD almighty, in delivering his law to fallen mankind, intended to propose the *means of their justification;* I own, your argument would be valid, and your inference undeniable. But the SUPREME LEGISLATOR had a very different, a far more mysterious design.—However, before we proceed to touch upon this point, let me desire to now *your* opinion.

For what reasons, think you, was the law ordained?

Ther. For what reasons?—To deter men from the commission of vice, and excite them to the practice of virtue. To set before them a rule for their conduct! which if they diligently observe, they shall be *rewarded* with eternal happiness; which if they presumptuously transgress, they shall be *punished* with eternal misery.

Asp. If man had never fallen, this doctrine had been sound divinity; and this method, a practicable scheme.—But, ever since the fall, such a way of salvation, is somewhat like the *north-east* passage. As mountains of ice, and the severest rigours of winter, block up *this:* so, extreme impotence in man, and the utmost perfection in the law, bar up *that.*—*The law,* saith the apostle, *was weak**; was absolutely unable to justify mankind, in any individual person. Unable, not through any defect in its constitutions but *through the flesh;* through the corruption and infirmity of human nature.

Therefore, in another place he adds; If *there had been a law given, which could have given life.*† A way of speaking which denotes, not a difficulty, but an *impossibility.* Exactly like that speech of JEHOVAH to Abraham; If *a man can number the dust of the earth.*§—Should you ask, why the law could not give a title of life? I answer, because fallen man was incapable of fulfilling its precepts.—And why was he incapable? because those precepts required perfection; insisted on perfection; and would admit of no obedience, which came short of perfection, to pass for a justifiing righteousness.

———So man could not the moral part
Perform, and not performing, cannot live ‡.

This is a truth, much to be regarded. It is a fundamental point, and of the utmost consequence, in the scheme of christianity. Yet, I know not how it is, many people have overlooked it, or mistaken it. Many well-

* Rom. viii. 3. † Gal. iii. 21. § Gen. xiii. 16.

‡ Milton, Book XII. 298.

meaning people have unwarily entertained the same notion with my *Theron*. Not apprehensive, that they frustrate hereby the grace of GOD, and render it of none effect with regard to themselves.—If you examine the scriptural account of the law, you will find it quite of another strain.

Ther. Pray let me hear the scriptural account. For, whenever those DIVINE ORACLES speak, I am all attention. Where-ever they interpose their authority, I am all submission.

Asp. *By the law is the knowledge of sin.** Far from being our justifier, it is our accuser. It arraigns and proves us guilty. It demonstrates, beyond all possibility of contradiction, that the very best among us, have failed and come short of our duty; nay, that the very best among us, have done amiss, and dealt wickedly.

I was alive without the law once, says the apostle.† I thought myself upright, obedient, holy; and entitled, by virtue of those qualifications, to life eternal. *But when the commandment came*, shining in its purity, and operating with power, *sin revived;* a clear and lively sense of guilt shot, like a piercing ray, through all my soul. I saw myself chargeable with many past provocations, I felt myself subject to much remaining corruption. In consequence of which, *I died;* my vain conceits were blasted; my presumptuous hopes expired; I could not but acknowledge myself, justly liable to condemnation and death.

Ther. It had this effect on *Saul*, when he was a malignant and barbarous persecutor. But, when people are virtuous and benevolent, what purpose does it then serve?

Asp. A very important one. Yet such as may, probably, at the first hearing, affect you with a little surprize. The law entered, says the apostle, that the offence might

———

Ther. Be restrained, no doubt.

Asp. That the offence might abound,‡ is the assertion.

* Rom. iii. 20 † Rom. vii. 9 ‡ Rom. v. 20

Ther. Surprising indeed! Is it possible that GOD's law should give countenance to sin? Nay, add spurs to the sinner?

Asp. Let us beware of mistaking our sacred casuist. The law entered, not that the commission of sin might be authorized, but that the abundance of our sins might be manifested. That all mankind, even your virtuous persons, may perceive the great impurity of their hearts;* the great multitude of their iniquities; and the horrible sinfulness of (what is called) the least sin in the sight of GOD.

This end could not be answered by a law, relaxed in its demands, or warping to our weakness; only by a system of precepts, every way exact, and in all degrees perfect.—Whoever would represent to his neighbour, the spots that sully, or the scars that disfigure his countenance, must effect the design not by a stained, but by a pure mirror.

Ther. The knowledge of sin, and a conviction of our exceeding sinfulness!--These are intentions, which I should not have suspected.

Asp. These are not all. There is another intention of the law, equally necessary, and no less awful. It reveals the wrath of GOD, against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.†—Having set before the sinner, his innumerable offences, and enormous guilt; it proceeds to the doom, which he deserves It unsheaths the sword of justice, and threatens the offender with everlasting destruction. Against all ungodliness, upon every transgression, it denounces the curse—the insupportable and eternal curse of GOD.

Ther. A modern writer supposes, that GOD may set aside the law, in favor of frail men. I might far more reasonably suppose, that he would mitigate the law, on the same consideration. But what you urge, makes me afraid to lean on so precarious a prop.

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* And therefore was law giv'n them, to evince
Their natural pravity —— MILT. B. XII. 287.

† Rom i. .8

Asp. To look for comfort and salvation from this quarter, would be worse than leaning on a precarious prop. It would be to lean, as the Arabian proverb speaks, on a wave of the sea: which will not only fail to support, but will certainly swallow up, the unadvised and rash depender. For One greater than any modern writer has affirmed, that every word or thought, opposite to the spirit of the law, renders a man liable to hell-fire.*

Set aside or mitigate! no, Theron; rather than the divine law should lose its honors, Sodom and Gomorrah were laid in ashes; the antient world was destroyed with a deluge; the present frame of nature is destined to the flames, and all its unholy inhabitants will be condemned to hell.—Nay, rather than the least tittle of the law should pass unaccomplished, its curse has been executed on GOD's own SON; and all its injunctions have been fulfilled, in the person of JESUS CHRIST. Which demonstrates the DEITY to be inflexibly in earnest, as to every word, spoken in his perfect law.

Ther. As I dare not confide in the modern provisionary *salvo*, so neither can I accede to your severe and terrifying notions.—The laws of a wise and beneficent governor, are calculated for the *good* of his subjects. What good, what advantage can accrue to us, from receiving such a sentence, and possessing such convictions?

Asp. Though I might mention many advantages, I shall content myself with selecting one. Which is not only valuable in itself, but the introduction to every spiritual blessing.—When, by the instrumentality of the law, and the illumination of the SPIRIT, we are brought under such convictions; then we are taught to see our danger; then we are made to feel our misery: and then we shall no longer sleep in security, but solicitously look out for deliverance, and gladly accept the sovereign remedy.

Ther. The law, according to your representation, is intended to accuse me—to convict me—to condemn me. So it becomes, instead of a salutary, a killing system.

* Matt. v. 22, 29, 30.

Asp. The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.* If we adhere to the literal sense, without attending to the spiritual design: if we regard only the precept and the sanction, as they stand in themselves; and neither consider, nor improve them, as acting in subserviency to the MEDIATOR's righteousness; they are doubtless a killing ordinance, and bind us down under a sentence of death. But rightly improved—Hold! let me proceed no farther with the argument.

You are a sportsman, Theron, and delight in the manly recreations of the field. You must therefore have read that fine poem, which so elegantly describes your favorite diversion.

Ther. The CHASE, I suppose you mean.

Asp. The same.—Do you remember the description of the royal stag chace?

Ther. Perfectly well. It is not a week, since I perused the whole passage; and with as much pleasure, as if it had been entirely new.

Asp. Then you can give me a summary of the agreeable narrative.

Ther. I can. But will not this chase lead us very far from our subject?

Asp. Perhaps, not so far as you imagine. I have a reason for my request.

Ther. What reason, I beseech you?

Asp. You shall soon know. Only favor me with the account.

Ther. I protest, I cannot discern the least connection, between these rural sports, and the grand topic of our conversation. However, since you command, I will implicitly obey.

The stag, roused from his lair, shakes his dappled sides; tosses his beamy head; and conscious of superior agility, seems to defy the gathering storm.—You see, speaking of poetry, I have catched something of the poetical strain.

* 2 Cor. iii. 6.

Asp. So much the better. This enlivened manner excites my curiosity. It makes me more desirous to hear the sequel.

Ther. First, he has recourse to stratagem, and evasive shifts. He plunges into the copse; darts across the glade; and wheels about in doubling mazes; as though he would pursue, even the foe he avoids. The full-mouthed pack unravel all his windings, and drive him from his wily arts.

Now, he betakes himself to flight, and confides in his speed. He bursts through the woods; bounds over the lawns; and leaves the lagging beagles far behind. The beagles slow, but sure, trace his steps, through woods, through lawns, through half the extended forest. Unwearied, still unwearied, they urge their ardent way, and gain upon the alarmed object of their pursuit.

Again he flies. Flies with redoubled swiftness. Shoots down the steep; strains up the hill; sweeps along the fields; and, at last, takes shelter in the immense recess of some sequestered grove. The sagacious hounds hang, with greedy nostrils, on the scent. They recover, by indefatigable assiduity, the ground they had lost. Up they come a third time; and, joining in a general peal of vengeance, hurry the affrighted animal from his short concealment.

Perplexed, and in the utmost distress, he seeks the numerous herd. He would lose himself, and elude his pursuers, amidst the multitude of his fellows. But they, unconcerned for a brother's woe, shun the miserable creature, or expel him from the selfish circle.—Abandoned by his associates, and haunted with apprehensions of approaching ruin, he trembles at every leaf that shakes. He starts; he springs; and wild, and swift as the wind, flies he knows not where, yet pours all his soul in flight.—Vain, vain are his efforts. The horrid cry, lately lessened, thickens upon the gale, and thunders in his ear.—Now, the poor breathless victim is full in view. His sprightliness forsakes him. His agility is spent. See! how he toils in yonder valley, with faultering limbs, and a hobling gait. The sight of their game, quickens the pace, and whets the ardour, of the impetuous hounds. With tumultuous violence they rush in, and with clamorous joy demand their prey.

What can he do? surrounded as he is, with insulting tongues, and ravenous jaws? despair is capable of inspiriting even the timorous breast. Having nothing to hope, he forgets to fear. He faces about, and makes a resolute stand. The trunk of a sturdy tree, covers his rear; and his own branching horns, defend him in front. He rushes upon his adversaries; goars some; lays others groveling on the turf; and makes the whole coward pack give way.

Encouraged by this unexpected success, his hopes revive. He rallies once again his drooping spirits; exerts the little remainder of his strength; and springs through the midst of the retiring rout.—It is his last, last chance. He stretches every nerve; once more loses sight of the rabble from the kennel; and, finding no security on the land, takes to the water. He throws his burning sides into the river: sails down the cooling stream; and slinks away to the verge of some little shelving island. There finding a resting-place for his feet, he skulks close to the shady margin. All immersed in the waves, excepting only his nostrils, he baffles, for a while, the prying eye of man, and the keener smell of brute.

Discovered, at length, and forced to quit this unavailing refuge, he climbs the slippery bank. Unable to fly any longer, he stands at bay against an aged willow. Stands, all faint with toil, and sobbing with anguish. The crouds that gather round him, with merciless and outrageous transport, triumph in his misery. A multitude of blood-thirsty throats, joined with the sonorous horn, ring his funeral knell.—The tears, till this fatal instant unknown, gush from his languishing eyes, and roll down his reeking cheeks. He casts one more look on the woods, the lawns, the pleasing scenes of his former delights. Adieu! a long adieu to these! he now expects his murderers; and prepares, as his last poor consolation, to sell his life as dear as possible.

At this most critical juncture, the *Royal* sportsman comes up. He sees the distressed creature; and, as soon as he sees, he pities. The clemency, which attends the throne, accompanies even the diversions of Majesty. He issues the high command. The prohibitory signal is given.

The pack, though eager for blood, are checked in a moment. And not checked only, but called off from the prey. Disappointed and growling, they retire; and leave the intended victim of their fury to enjoy his liberty, his safety, and his ease again.

I have now followed the stag, till I have tired your patience. Why did you suffer me to run on, at this extravagant rate? you know I am, on these favourite topics, an everlasting talker.

Asp. Why this apology, *Theron?* I am sure you did not see my mouth yawn, or my head nod, while you was pursuing your subject. Besides, I intend to make reprisals, and put *your* attention to the same trial.

Thus the strictness of the *law* pursues the soul; dislodges it from every refuge of lies; and never remits its terrifying menaces, till the poor delinquent ceases from self-confidence, and fixes on CHRIST for his whole salvation.

The man, perhaps, is awakened into a serious concern for his eternal state. In consequence of which, he relinquishes his profane and iniquitous practices. Breaks the sabbath, and defrauds his neighbour no more —But the law quickly represents, and in a glaring light, that a *negative* obedience is by no means sufficient.

Upon this, he betakes himself to a course of positive holiness. Gets acquainted with religious people, and performs religious duties. Prays in secret, and attends public ordinances. Conscientiously observes the LORD's day, and regulates his behaviour by the rule of GOD's commandments. Now, he is ready to congratulate himself on his remarkable and hopeful reformation.

Soon he perceives, that all his proficiency is but skin-deep: a mere outside varnish: which has not penetrated the inner man. He begins, therefore, to watch over the motions, and bewail the evils of his heart. He labours to subdue pride, and curb passion; to purge out filthy lusts, and to banish spiritual wickedness. Notwithstanding all his vigilance, conscience flies in his face, either for the neglect of some virtue, or the commission of some sin.— The law rings in his ear that terrible denunciation; " curs- " ed is he, that performeth not *all* things."

Struck by this conviction, his wounds bleed afresh. He is obliged to seek some new balm for his sore. In order to appease an offended GOD, and atone for his sinful relapses, he makes many sorrowful confessions; possibly submits to voluntary sufferings. He denies himself, and bestows liberally on the poor. He sighs deeply, and mourns bitterly.—But can waters that are muddy, cleanse the garment that is filthy? Wilt thou satisfy, O vain man, wilt thou satisfy for one sin, by committing another? In these penetential exercises, were thy thoughts steadily devout? In those acts of beneficence, were thy affections truly charitable? And did both proceed from a pure undefiled heart? If not, such fansied reparations of past faults, only aggravate the heavy score.

What shall he do? he cannot pay. To beg he is ashamed. Fain would he enter into life, yet not be too much indebted to grace. He attempts therefore to *compound* with heaven. He binds himself by solemn vows, perhaps by sacramental engagements, to use greater circumspection for the future. Then turns his eye to the divine MEDIATOR; not with a view of relying wholly on his righteousness; but only to obtain such a supply, as may make up the deficiencies of his own.—Somewhat like this was the mistake of the *Galatian* converts; against which St. *Paul*, in his epistle to that people, so solidly disputes, and so sharply inveighs. Assuring them, that if they add to their REDEEMER's death and obedience, any other requisite whatsoever, in the matter of acceptance with GOD, CHRIST *shall profit them nothing*.

For a while, he holds fast his purposed integrity. At length, falling short, evidently if not scandalously short, in executing his part, a startling voice sounds in his ear, that dreadful alarm; cursed is he that *continueth* not in all "things." An impartial conscience interprets the voice; and undeniably proves, that whoever commits the least sin, or fails in any point, does not continue in all things. His heart sinks with discouragement, and all his resolutions hang their enfeebled heads. He has tried every method, that he can devise; and has found every method ineffectual. All his expedients are a spider's web; and his hope is, as the giving up of the ghost.

His soul, pursued by the law, and hunted by terror, is brought to the gates of death, or the very brink of despair. And now the PRINCE of peace, now the LORD our righteousness, appears for his rescue. Now is accomplished that gracious declaration; *O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help.*†—Driven from every false refuge, and drawn by the blessed SPIRIT, he comes weary and heavy laden to CHRIST. Convinced of the sin of his nature, the sin of his life, and the sin of his best duties, he renounces himself in every view. This is all his salvation, and all his desire, that he may win CHRIST, and be found in him. Did that poor afflicted woman say, *if I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole?* with equal ardour does this enlightened sinner cry; "If I may but have fellowship "with the glorious IMMANUEL, in his merits and in his "spirit, I am alive from the dead; I am happy for ever."

Having seen a glimpse of the REDEEMER and his transcendent excellency; having received a taste from the inexhaustible fullness of his grace; O! how he longs for brighter manifestations! how he thirsts after more plentiful draughts!—*Whosoever comes to* CHRIST, *shall in no wise be cast out.* He that awakens these ardent desires, in his due time gives the desired blessings. After various conflicts, the poor *ungodly* wretch *believes.* He believes, that the SON of the MOST HIGH died in *his* stead, and was obedient for *his* justification. Believes, that all the riches of the adored MEDIATOR's life and death are for sinners —for the worst of sinners—for *him.*

By this faith, receiving CHRIST and his benefits, his heart is purified; his heart is quickened. He abhors every evil way, and is fitted for every good work.—Though temptations assault him, he derives strength from his SAVIOUR; resists the devil; and is faithful unto death.—Though corruptions defile him, he flies to the *fountain opened for uncleanness;* makes daily, hourly application of th

† Hos xiii. 9.

blood of sprinkling; and goes on his way, rejoicing in GOD his SAVIOUR.

Ther. Your discourse puts me in mind of *Absalom's* procedure, when *Joab* refused to make him a visit. The prince ordered his servants to set on fire the general's standing corn.† This stratagem had its intended effect. The apprehension of danger *drove* him, when the respectful invitation would not *lead* him, to a personal interview. You seem to suppose, that the law was made so perfect and so rigorous, with some such design. A design, to lay us under a *necessity*, of renouncing our own works, and flying to the atonement of CHRIST.

Asp. With such a design it was delivered on *Sinai*. And for this opinion, I have a far better authority, than my own supposition. We are assured by unerring wisdom, that CHRIST *is the end of the law.*‡ It points invariably to him. It terminates wholly in him. And *then* obtains its principal purpose, when sinners are brought to their divine REDEEMER, for righteousness. Then, there is no occasion for a *mitigation* of the law; for an abatement of its demands, or a moderation of its curse. Because, we have *that* in CHRIST, which fulfils its demands and exhausts its curse; which maintains its honor, yet justifies its transgressor.

The law hath concluded all mankind under sin ‖. Hath drawn, as it were, a net of guilt and vengeance round the whole world. Yet not with an intention, that any should be discouraged now, or perish for ever: but that every one may see his inexpressible need, of a SAVIOUR's death, and of a SAVIOUR's obedience. That being thus prepared, both to value and receive so precious a blessing, *the promise of* justification *by faith in* JESUS CHRIST *may be given*—freely given *to them that believe.*

Let us advert to this grand aim of the law. Then, we shall see goodness, unquestionable and sovereign goodness, in forming its constitution so *sublimely perfect*, and making its threatenings so *inflexibly severe*. Exclusive of this

† 2 Sam. xiv. 30. ‡ Rom. x. 4. ‖ Gal. iii. 22.

wholesome severity, we should supinely disesteem, perhaps wantonly reject, the grace of the gospel.—The *prodigal son* would never have returned to his father, in that humble, submissive, supplicating posture; if he had not found his circumstances, utterly ruined, and felt himself perishing with hunger no more would the conceited sons of *Adam*, disclaim all pretence to any merit of their own; and, with the halter of self-condemnation about their necks, fall down at the feet of a merciful REDEEMER; if they were not instigated by the sharp goad, or rather driven by the flaming sword of the law.

Ther. Has the law then nothing to do with our temper and conversation? is it not longer to be considered as a system of duties? no longer to be regarded as a rule of life?

Asp. When it has forced the lines of self-righteousness, and driven us to JESUS CHRIST (that only citadel of safety!) for acceptance and salvation; *then* it serves as a rule for our conduct. *Then* it shews us, like a friend and a guide, how to order our conversation, and adorn our profession; how to glorify GOD, and express our gratitude to CHRIST. But, till it has accomplished the fore-mentioned end, it thunders vengeance; it flashes terror; it is, as *Moses* speaks, *a fiery law.**

And is it, may dear *Theron*, a fiery law? what then shall we know, without that meritorious obedience of the REDEEMER; which is, to the guilty soul, *as the cold of snow in the time of harvest.*†—Is it a law, which *worketh wrath?* then let it endear to our affections that inestimably precious gospel, which *preacheth peace by* JESUS CHRIST.—Is it *the ministration of condemnation*‖? O! let it quicken our flight to that all-gracious SURETY, who was condemned at *Pilate's* bar, that we may be acquited at GOD's tribunal.

To all this agrees our celebrated *Milton*. Whose divinity on this subject at least, is as faultless, as his poetry is matchless. You will give me leave to quote a few of his beau-

* *Fiery Law*, Deut. xxxiii. 2. † Prov. xxv. 13. ‖ Cor. iii. 19.

tiful lines. Which *recapitulates*, as it were, the whole preceding conversation: and, while they recapitulate the conversation, *confirm* the doctrine. This will make you some amends, for my late tedious harangue. This will tip the end with gold.

So law appears imperfect; and but giv'n
With purpose to resign them, in full time,
Up to a better cov'nant; disciplin'd
From shadowy types to truth; from flesh to spirit,
From imposition of strict laws, to free
Acceptance of large grace; from servile fear,
To filial; works of law, to works of faith *.

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* BOOK XII. 3 O.





DIALOGUE X.

ASPASIO.

AGAIN, Theron! must we never lay aside the weapons of controversy?—You put me in mind of the resolute *Athenian*; who, having fought with distinguished bravery on the field of Marathon, pursued the vanquished *Persians* to their fleet. At that very instant, a galley full of the enemy's troops, was putting off to sea. Determined, if possible, to prevent their escape, he laid hold on the vessel with his right hand. Which was no sooner fixed, than chopped off by the sailors. The warrior, not at all discouraged, seized it with his left. When that also was cut away, he fastened his teeth in its side; and never quitted his gripe, till he resigned his breath.

Ther. I have been reconsidering the case of *imputed righteousness*; and am by no means satisfied, as to the propriety of the phrase, or the truth of the doctrine; especially, in the sense which you espouse.—Objections arise, more substantial and weighty, than any that have hitherto been urged. And which, if I mistake not, you will find it a more difficult task to answer.

Asp. I must do my best. And if my best attempts prove unsuccessful, I shall say with the gallant *Iphicrates*, when overpowered by the eloquence of his antagonist; " My " adversary is the better actor, but mine is the better play."

I say *better*—for to you, *Theron*, I will freely own, what to another person I should not be so forward to disclose; that I receive no comfort, but from the habitual belief, and daily application of this precious doctrine.—Whenever I read the most correct and elaborate writings, which proceed in the contrary strain, I feel my spirits heavy; I find my prospects gloomy; and not one ray of consolation gleams upon my mind. Whereas, *much meaner* compositions, which breath the Saviour of this evangelical unction, seldom fail to quicken my hopes; to brighten my views; and put into my mouth that piously alert profession of the psalmist, *I will run the way of thy commandments, now thou hast set my heart at liberty.**—Though I am far from laying any considerable stress upon this observation; farther still from advancing it into the place of an argument; yet I may be permitted to mention it, in the confidence and familiarity of friendship.

Ther. An opinion delivered with so much modesty, and so nearly connected with my *Aspasio's* comfort, has doubtless a claim to my serious attention. Otherwise, it might possibly provoke my raillery. For, you must know, I am no great admirer of inward feelings. I cannot think them a very solid method of demonstrating your point. It must be inforced by better reasons, if you would gain it access to *my* heart.

We must place, you say, a dependence upon the LORD JESUS CHRIST, in all that he has *done* and *suffered*. What HE has done and suffered, you add, is our only justifying righteousness: and, to place our dependence on it, is the only way to receive pardon of sins; the only way to inherit eternal life.

Asp. I have said it, *Theron*, and I abide by it. This being the righteousness of GOD, is—

Ther. Give me leave, before you proceed farther, to propose a query. Does the righteousness of GOD signify the active and passive obedience of CHRIST?

Asp. righteousness is a conformity to the law, in heart, and in life As the SON of GOD voluntarily made him-

* Psal. cxix. 32.

self subject to the law; perfectly fulfiled its precepts; and suffered to the utmost its penalty; this, I should imagine, furnishes us with the *truest* and *noblest* signification of the phrase.

Ther. What, if I or others should imagine quite the reverse?

Asp. I thank my friend for his admonition. It is indeed taking too much upon me, to suppose, that *my bare* imagination should pass for orthodoxy and truth.—But is there nothing weighty in the reason, which I have alledged? was there no righteousness in our LORD's most free submission to the commands of the law, and in his persevering performance of all holy duties? was there no righteousness in the consummate excellency of his nature, his temper, his conversation? no righteousness in the matchless perfection of his acting, his abstaining,* his suffering? nay; was not this obedience, in the most plain and full sense of the expression, *the righteousness of GOD?* did it not, in every sense of the expression, and in every view of the subject, answer the exalted character? being, as a masterly critic explains the pharse, " A righteousness devised by GOD " the FATHER, from all eternity; wrought out by GOD " the SON, in the person of JESUS CHRIST, applied by " GOD the HOLY GHOST, to the sinner's soul."

Ther. This doctrine of yours, if I rightly understand it, would make remission of sins but one *half* of our justification; and something else necessary, in order to life eternal. Which is just as rational, as to suppose, that though one cause may excel darkness, another must supervene, in order to introduce light.

Asp. The nature of justification, and the nature of condemnation, are two *opposites*, which will mutually illustrate each other.—What is implied in the condemnation of a sinner? he forfeits eternal life, and is doomed to eternal death.—What is included in the justification of a sinner? It supersedes his obligation to punishment, and invests him with a title of happiness.—*Both* which are procured by

* Alluding to the summary of moral duties, given us by Epictetus.

CHRIST's mediation in our behalf; and *both* take place, when we are united to that divine HEAD.—We suppose, therefore, a difference between the benefits; but have no notion of deriving them from two different sources. We ascribe them both to one and the same all-sufficient cause, JESUS CHRIST *the righteous.*

Your comparison, though intended to overthrow, I think, fully establishes the sentiment.— When yonder bright orb makes his first appearance in the east, what effects are produced? the shades of night are dispersed, and the light of day is diffused.—To what are they owing? each to a separate, or both to the same origin? every one's experience will answer the question. Thus, when the author of salvation is manifested in the soul, he brings *at once* pardon and acceptance. Both which constitute the *healing* * of the nations; and both seem necessary to complete the blessing of justification.

To illustrate this point, we will suppose *Adam*, continuing in innocence, and presevering in obedience. We will suppose him come to the last period of his abode on earth; appearing before the SUPREME JUDGE, as a candidate for eternal life. How would his sentence run? "Thou hast "been a rebel; but infinite mercy forgives thee." Would it not rather proceed in this manner? "Thou art perfectly "righteous; thou hast been completely obedient; there-"fore, infinite fidelity rewards thee." Now, how could CHRIST *bruise the serpent's head!* how remedy the direful effects of the fall, and restore the happiness lost by *Adam;* if he did not both take away our guilt, and put us in possession of a perfect righteousness?

Ther. This, I know, is the fine-spun theory of your systematic divines. But, where is their *warrant* from scripture? by what authority do they introduce such subtle distinctions?

Asp. I cannot think the distinction so subtle, or the theory so finely spun. To be released from the damnatory sentence, is one thing; to be treated as a righteous person, is

* Mal. iv. 2.

evidently another.—*Absalom* was pardoned, when he received a permission to remove from *Geshur* and dwell at *Jerusalem*. But this was very different from the recommencement of filial intercourse, and parental endearment.*—A rebel may be *exempted* from the capital punishment, which his traiterous practices deserve; without being *restored* to the dignity of his former state, or the rights of a loyal subject. In christianity likewise, to be freed from the charge of guilt, and to be regarded as righteous persons, are two several blessings; really distinct in themselves, often distinguished in scripture, though always included in the very essence of justification.

Ther. Where are they distinguished? in what texts of scripture? this is what I called for—your scriptural warrant.

Asp. What think you of *Job's* reply to his censorious friends? *GOD forbid, that I should justify you!*† that he *forgave* them, there is no doubt. Yet he could not *justify* them: could not allow their reflections to be equitable, or their behaviour charitable.

What think you of *Solomon's* supplication? *then hear thou in heaven, and do, and judge thy servants; condemning the wicked, to bring his way upon his head; and justifying the righteous, to give him according to his righteousness.*‡ To condemn, in this passage, evidently signifies to pronounce guilty, and obnoxious to punishment. By purity of reason, to *justify*, must denote to pronounce righteous, and intitled to happiness.

What says *Solomon's* father? *enter not into judgment with thy servant, O LORD! for in thy sight, shall no man living be justified.*§ A man might be *pardoned*, if judged according to the tenour of his own obedience. But no man could be *declared righteous*, in consequence of such a tryal: this, before the supreme tribunal, were absolutely and universally impossible.

* 2 Sam. xiv. 24. † Job. xxvii. 32. ‡ 1 Kings viii. 32.

§ Psal. cxliii. 2. See also Psal. li. 6. *Heb. B.b.*

From all which passages I conclude; that, to be accounted righteous, is different from, is superior to, the bare remis ion of sin. Is as our church expresses it, *of unjust to be made just before GOD.*

Ther. All these instances are selected from the *old* testament. The *new*, if I mistake not, speaks another language. Consider the case of the penitent *publican.* What does he request? *GOD be merciful to me a sinner!* what does he obtain? *he went down to his house justified.** If then the petition and the grant may be deemed correspondent, pardon and justification must be reckoned equivalent.

Asp. The old and the new testament are, in their style and contents, exactly correspondent. *Echo,* in yonder cloysters, does not more punctually reverberate the speaker's voice, than those divine books harmonize with each other.

It will not follow, from the *publican's* request and the *publican's* blessing, that pardon and justification are the same. Only, that GOD's bounty frequently *exceeds* our prayers, and is larger than our expectations. Or, that the blessing which was implored, and the blessing which was vouchsafed, are inseparably connected, and always accompany each other.

That they are not the same, will appear from an instance recorded in the new testament. The instance I mean, of CHRIST and *Barabbas.*—Of *Barabbas* the judge might properly say; "He is a notorious malefactor. But I acquit "him. I release him." This is pardon.—Of CHRIST the judge actually said; *I find no fault at all in him.* To which the centurion added; *certainly this was a righteous man.* This is justification.

What I am asserting, will more evidently appear, from that gracious proclamation, made by the sacred herald; *be it known unto you, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him, all that believe, are* JUSTIFIED *from all things.* Did the captive *Grecians* leap for joy, did they rend the very air with

* Luke xviii 13, 14.

their shouts? when the cryer, by command of the *Roman* general, proclaimed liberty—wished-for liberty to them all? And shall not our hearts spring with transport and gratitude, when we hear this message of mercy from the Ambassador of heaven! let us dwell upon it a moment. It may drop balm on our consciences, while it yields argument for our dispute.

" *Through this* SAVIOUR, by his order and in his " name, I propose to your acceptance the free, the full, " the absolute forgiveness of all your sins. By which you " shall be discharged from guilt; delivered from punish- " ment; and rescued from all the dreadful consequences " of your iniquities."—Inestimable grant! yet, in the last clause, it proceeds to a patent of honor.—" *Through this* " JESUS, who is both GOD and *man*, who was dead and " is alive for evermore, *all that believe are* JUSTIFIED. The " verdict runs in their favor. They are pronounced righte- " ous in open court. Justice itself declares, they are " *without spot and blameless.*"

Ther. If this be justification, it is a high privilege indeed. Too high, methinks, for sinful man to expect.

Asp. It is too high, infinitely too high, for sinful man to attain by any obedience of his own. But not too high for the righteousness of CHRIST to procure, nor for the grace of GOD to confer.—I appeal to yourself, whether this is not the customary and obvious signification of the word. When a criminal has been found guilty, but is freed from punishment, we may say of such a one, " he is pardoned;" we never say, " he is justified." Then only a person is justified, when his righteousness is made clear as the light.

This the very genius of our language implies, and with this the doctrine of the apostle accords. St. *Paul* mentions *a justification of life.* Not barely an exemption from the sentence of death; but such a justification, as gives a *title** to the reward of life. The words are very emphatical. We shall injure the dignity of their meaning, if we understand them in a more contracted sense.--Towards the close

* Rom. v. 18.

of the same chapter, we have another passage, rich with consolation, and full to our purpose. *Grace reigneth through righteousness unto eternal life.** Here, is pointed out the *prime source* of all our blessings, infinitely free and triumphant grace: the *meritorious cause*, not any works of man, not any qualifications of our own, but the perfect righteousness of our LORD JESUS CHRIST: the *effect* or *end* of all; which is, not barely an absolution from guilt, but an instatement in life; a life of holy communion with GOD in this world, to be crowned with an eternal fruition of him in another.

Accordingly, eternal life is called *the hope*, not of forgiveness, but of *righteousness*.† And it is bestowed, not barely because of absolution, but *because of righteousness*.‡ I think, therefore, we have very sufficient reason to distinguish, between the *pardon* which delivers from hell, and the *righteousness* which intitles to heaven. The former does by no means constitute the latter; but is connected with it, as a link in the same chain; or included in it, as part of the same whole—that important and glorious whole, JUSTIFICATION! which, to every poor sinner, who knows his undone condition, must be incomparably more valuable, than ten thousand worlds.

Ther. Admitting your distinction to be proper; is not the death of CHRIST, sufficient of *itself* to obtain, both our full pardon, and our final happiness?

Asp. Since my friend has started the question, I may venture, with all reverence to the divine counsels, to answer in the negative: it being necessary, that the REDEEMER of men should *obey*, as well as *suffer*, in their stead.—For this we have the testimony of our church; "It "had not been enough to be delivered by his death from "sin, except by his resurrection we had been endowed "with righteousness."—For this we have the authority of "our LORD; *this commandment*, says he, *have I received of my* FATHER, *that I should lay down my life.*§ *Thus*

* Rom. v. 21. † Gal. v. 5. ‡ Rom. viii. 10.
§ John. x. 18.

it becometh us, adds he in another place, *to fulfil all righteousness.**—To all which his apostle subjoins; that, if we *reign in life*, it must be, not only through those sufferings which expiate, but also *through* that *righteousness*† which merits.

Ther. Our LORD's testimony relates only to a *positive* institution, and is quite foreign to your purpose.—I have often been disgusted at such strained applications of scripture. The partizans of a system wrest the sacred book. They deal with divine truth, as the tyrant *Procrustes* served those unhappy creatures, who fell into his merciless hands. Is a text too short, to suit their design? Our *Procrustean* expositors can stretch it on the rack, and lengthen its sense. Is it too full, to consist with their scheme? They can lop off a limb, secrete a sentence, or contract the meaning.—Is this to reverence the great GOD? is this to treat respectfully his holy word?

Asp. I have been grieved, I assure you, and disgusted at this practice, as well as yourself. A practice, not only very irreverent, but very injudicious also. It really prejudices the cause, it would unfairly recommend. Such a support is like *a broken tooth, or a foot out of joint*;‡ not only unserviceable, but hurtful; an obstruction, rather than a furtherance.—However, I am not conscious of committing any violence on this passage, or of forcing it into my service. The circumstance you object, rather strengthens, than invalidates the conclusion. If it was so requisite for our blessed MEDIATOR, to observe a *positive* and temporary institution; how much more necessary, to fulfil those *moral* precepts, whose obligation is unalterable and everlasting? At his baptism, he observed the former; as a token or earnest, that through his whole life, he would fulfil the latter.

Besides; it should be considered, whether CHRIST's sufferings were a complete satisfaction to the law? complete they were, with regard to the *penalty* not with regard to the *precept*. A distinction obvious and weighty. From

* Matt. iii. 15. † Rom. v. 17. ‡ Prov. xxv. 19.

whence arises the following argument; which, for *once*, you will allow me to propose in the logical form.

By what alone the law was not satisfied; by that alone sinners could not be justified:

By CHRIST's sufferings alone, the law was not satisfied:

Therefore, by CHRIST's sufferings alone, sinners could not be justified.

But when we join the active with the passive obedience of our LORD; when we add to both, the perfect sanctity of his nature; how does our justification stand firm, in the *fullest* sense of the word! we have all that the law demands, both for our exemption from the curse, and as a title to the blessing.

Ther. Does not the scripture ascribe the whole of our salvation to the death of CHRIST? delivering it, as a never to be forgotten maxim in christianity; that *we have redemption through his blood:** *are brought near through the blood of* CHRIST:† nay, that *we are justified* (the very point under debate) *through his blood.*‡—Would the inspired writer have assigned these various blessings to this *one* cause; if it had been a price inadequate to the purchase, or a means insufficient to accomplish the end?

Asp. This *part* of our LORD's meritorious humiliation, is, by a very usual figure, put for the *whole*. The death of CHRIST includes, not only his sufferings, but his obedience. The shedding of his precious blood, was at once the grand instance of his suffering, and the finishing act of his obedience. In this view it is considered, and thus it is interpreted, by his own ambassador. Who, speaking of his divine MASTER, says, *he was* obedient unto *death, even the death of the cross.*‖

By the same figure, faith is sometimes said to be a lively influential persuasion, *that* CHRIST *died for our sins.*§ At other times, it is represented as a firm practical belief, that GOD *hath raised him from the dead.*¶ Neither of

* Eph. i. 7. † Eph. ii. 13. ‡ Rom. v. 9. ‖ Phil. ii. 8.

§ 1 Cor. xv. 3. ¶ Rom x. 9.

which can, without the utmost contrariety to the analogy of scripture, be taken in the *exclusive* sense. Each act must be understood, not separately, but jointly. Each as implying both, or reciprocally inferring one another.

In like manner, when the scripture ascribes our justification to the death of CHRIST; we are not to think, that it would *set aside*, but *imply* his obedience. It is not because his active obedience has no concern, in procuring the blessing: but because his bitter passion was the most conspicuous, and the completing stage of his ever-glorious undertaking. Then, and not till then, he could truly say; FATHER, *I have finished the work, thou gavest me to do.**

Ther. According to your account then, it should be possible for a man to have all his sins pardoned, yet not attain to *complete* justification. Which is as contrary to sound sense, and the true divinity, as to imagine, that crookedness may be removed, and the object not become straight.

Asp. No, Theron. I only apprehend, that pardon does by no means exhaust the *whole* nature of justification. For which I have a better warrant than my own apprehension. *He was delivered, for our sins, and rose again for our justification.* "O most comfortable word, saith our church, "evermore to be borne in remembrance! He died to put "away sin, *this is one part of justification;* he rose again "to endow us with righteousness."† *This is the other part.*

According to my account, it is impossible, that the active and passive obedience of our REDEEMER should be disjoined. To whomsoever the one is imputed, from him the other is not with-held. They were *undivided in* CHRIST the illustrious head; and they are undivided in their application to his mystical body. As CHRIST in suffering obeyed, and in obeying suffered; so, whoever receives CHRIST as an atonement, receives him also as a righteousness.

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* John xvii 4.

† For this, and the preceding quotation, see our Homily on the Resurrection.

This has been observed before; and if this be real fact, what an *inestimably precious* gift, is the gift of CHRIST! never was the most sovereign remedy, so admirably suited to any malady, as this is adapted to our necessitous and miserable state. In HIM may we be found, living and dying! how safe, how happy then!—Let me not weary your patience, if I repeat a passage from our excellent Dr. *Lightfoot*. Which, though artless and remarkably simple, has very much affected my mind; and, I hope, will leave some valuable impression on my friend's. "Justification, "says that judicious divine, is a man's being interested in "all CHRIST's righteousness. And if any thing is to be "longed for, sure that is, to be interested in *all* CHRIST's "righteousness."

Ther. You do'nt weary my patience; neither do you satisfy my doubts. For you take no notice of the *absurdity* objected, and the comparison which enforces it.

Asp. Your comparison, my dear friend, is not founded on a *parallel* case. Neither sense, nor philosophy find a medium, between the removal of crookedness, aud the succession of straightness. But reason discerns an *apparent*, and revelation maintains an *important* difference, between the pardon of sin, and a title to life. This has already been proved from scripture; and is, to me at least, evident from the very nature of things. If a king, in favour of some condemned malefactor, revoke the sentence of death; this is one very considerable act of clemency. But if he pleases to make the pardoned criminal, a *partaker* of his kingdom, or an heir of his crown; this surely is a new, and a much higher instance of royal bounty.

Since you insist upon a *similitude*, the word of GOD, which always speaks with consummate propriety, will furnish us with one. *Zechariah* illustrates the doctrine of justification. He represents the sinner by a person arrayed in *filthy garments*. His pardon is described by *taking away* this sordid apparel. By which benefit, he ceases to be defiled; yet his he not hereby cloathed; yet is it not hereby justified. This is an additional blessing; signified by putting on *change of raiment*,* and wearing beautiful robes.—Here, the circumstances tally. The two constituent parts

of justification, are severally displayed, and strongly marked. Here we have the removal of filth, and the accession of beauty; that which frees us from being abhored, and that which renders us accepted. Which, though distinguishable in themselves, and distinguished by the sacred writer, are always united in the divine donation.

After all, I readily acknowledge, that the clemency of an earthly sovereign, the proceedings of an earthly tribunal, or the generosity of an earthly benefactor, are but partial and inadequate representations of this wonderful affair. Because, in the case of justifying a sinner, all is absolutely free, yet all is strictly due: *absolutely free*, with respect to unworthy man: *strictly due*, with regard to the merits of CHRIST.

Ther. *Due to* CHRIST—this notion, I suppose, is founded upon a covenant, a *chimerical* covenant, that CHRIST would take upon him the obedience required from man, of which there is not the least intimation in holy scripture.

Asp. That CHRIST undertook every thing necessary, to redeem *lost sinners* from death and hell; every thing necessary, to procure for *attainted rebels* a title to life and glory; this cannot be reckoned chimerical. This must be as real, as that lost sinners are redeemed, or attainted rebels restored. Every proof of the one, proves and establishes the other. This is what we call a *covenant;* and, from, its benign nature, THE COVENANT OF GRACE.

Without *undertaking* this, I see not how our LORD could sustain the character of a SURETY; nor without *fulfilling* it, how he could execute the office of a REDEEMER.—And I believe, you yourself will be at a loss to shew, with what kind of justice the eternal FATHER could *lay** our iniquities on the innocent JESUS, unless he had *consented* to be answerable for our guilt.

Ther. This is no answer to my objection. I said—and it has been asserted by a very eminent and able pen—that

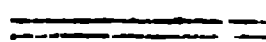
* Isai. liii. 6.

there is no intimation of any such covenant in the whole scriptures.

Asp. What then can be the meaning of those remarkable words, in the prophecy of *Zechariah? the counsel of peace shall be between them both.** Here, I think, the covenant is mentioned, and the parties are specified.—*The counsel of peace*, if I mistake not, signifies the mysterious and unsearchable contrivance, formed for the recovery of ruined man.—Formed and carried into execution, by the LORD Almighty, or GOD the FATHER; and that illustrious person, who is to *build the temple, and bear the glory.* A character, which none can claim; a task, to which none is equal; but the blessed JESUS only.

In psalm the xlth, the *conditions* of the covenant are circumstantially recorded. Which were the incarnation, obedience, and death of the eternal SON: *a* body *hast thou prepared me. Lo! I come to* do *thy will*; and to *offer one sacrifice for sin.*†—The *accomplishment* of these conditions, is alledged and pleaded by our great MEDIATOR, in the introduction to his last solemn prayer.‡ What he implores, in the process of his supplications, may be looked upon as the *recompence*,|| decreed him by the FATHER, and stipulated in this magnificent treaty.—*Implores*, did I say? 'Tis very observable, that our LORD makes a *demand*, rather than a *request*. A word of authority, not of supplication. He claims what, by the FATHER's engagement, and by his own obedience, was become his unquestionable right.

Here are the parties of the covenant; the conditions of the covenant; the performance of the covenant; and the reward, which, by virtue of such performance, is merited, is claimable, is due. All this, I should imagine, amounts to an *intimation*, and somewhat *more* than an intimation of the covenant.



* Zech. vi. 12, 13. † Heb. x 5, 7, 12. ‡ John xvii.

|| This recompence is specified and promised, in another authentic copy of the same grand treaty, registered Isai xlix. 1—6.

Ther. This you call the covenant of grace: but if we are justified by works. So that, before you can strike out such a way of salvation, you must *contradict* yourself: and, what is more adventurous, you must abolish that fundamental principle of the gospel; *by the works of the law, shall no flesh be justified.*

Asp. We *are* I grant it, justified by works. But whose? the works of CHRIST, not our own.—This is very far from contradicting ourselves; equally far is it from abolishing, what you call a "principle of the gospel." Which, though an undeniable truth, is not an evangelical doctrine. Because, it only shews us our miserable state, and the utter impossibility of relieving ourselves. Whereas, nothing is *genuine* gospel,* but what speaks comfort, and administers recovery.

Between the covenant of works, and the covenant of grace, this, I apprehend, is the difference. In the former, man was to obtain eternal life by his *personal* obedience. By the latter, the obedience of his *surety* is accepted, in stead of his own. The righteousness required by both, to not *sincere*, but *complete;* not proportioned to the abilities of fallen man, but to the purity of the law, and the majesty of the LAWGIVER.—By this means, the glory of GOD as an awful sovereign, and the glory of his law as an inviolable system, are entirely preserved and illustriously displayed. The salvation of sinners, neither clashes with the truth, nor interferes with the justice of the supreme LEGISLATOR. On the contrary, it becomes a *faithful* and *just*† procedure of the most high GOD, to justify *him that believeth on* JESUS.

Ther. When you make this difference between the two covenants, where is your authority from scripture? Which of the sacred writers have taught us, that though one demanded personal, the other is content with *vicarious* obedience?

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* The gospel, precisely considered, and as it stands in contradistinction to the law, is the doctrine of pardon and life through JESUS CHRIST, through his satisfaction and righteousness, freely presented to lost sinners, and freely to be applied to their salvation.

† 1 John i. 9.

Asp Which? *The first three.* The most eminent historian; the most enraptured poet; and the most zealous preacher. I need not inform you, that I mean, *Moses, David*, and *Paul*.

The testimony of *David* has already been recited.—*Moses* gives us a concise, but very instructive account of the second covenant. With *whom*, according to his representation, was it made? not with *Adam*, or any of his posterity, but with the LORD JESUS CHRIST, in the room and stead of both. None of the articles are proposed to a poor, impotent, ruined creature. It is not a law of commandments, but a free promise only, that must afford relief in a fallen state. Therefore the whole burden is consigned over to the interposing SAVIOUR, significantly described by *the seed of the woman*. It is not said, "Thy best endeavours, O *Adam*, thy true repentance and sincere "obedience, shall retrieve this fatal miscarriage; but, *the* "*seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head*.* The "SON of the most high, by taking thy nature, submitting "to thy obligations, and suffering death for thy sins, HE, "even HE shall fully repair thy loss."

CHRIST, we see, undertook to execute the conditions. CHRIST was our representative in this great transaction. For which reason he is styled by St. *Paul, the second man*,† and *the surety of a better covenant*.‡—Our help being laid upon ONE, that is so mighty; upon ONE, that is so faithful; the covenant is said to be, *in all things well ordered and sure*.|| Admirably well ordered indeed, for the comfort of the *christian*, and the security of his salvation.—"'Tis true, may he argue, I cannot fulfil the conditions; "and 'tis equally true, that no such thing is required at "my hands. The LORD JESUS CHRIST, of his adorably rich goodness, has performed all that was conditional; and has established, for me and for his people, a "*valid title* to the promises, the privileges, and—

* Gen. iii. 15. † 1 Cor. xv. 48. ‡ Heb. vii. 22.

|| 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

Ther. "has thereby released me from all obligation to "practical duty."—Farewell then to our own obedience. No more occasion for any holiness of life. Nay; the sluice is opened for an inundation of ungodliness.—Fine divinity truly! Should I not rather say? downright *antinomianism!*

Asp. No, my friend: CHRIST *came not to destroy the law, but to fulfil.** He has fulfilled it, to the uttermost, in his own person. He has also merited for us; those supplies of the SPIRIT, which alone can enable weak corrupt creatures, to yield acceptable obedience.—Though our LORD JESUS died, and was obedient for *the ungodly;* though he always *finds* us ungodly, when he justifies us; yet he never *leaves* his people in this abominable state. On the contrary; he *teaches them*, and by this very grace of free justification, *to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts.*†

Pray, let us consider the tenour of this covenant; since you are so very apprehensive of its consequences.—"*I* "*will put my laws into their minds, and on their hearts will* "*I write them.*‡ They shall discern such a beauty and "glory in my precepts, as will engage their desires, and "win their affections. So that it shall no longer be their "*burden*, but their *delight*, even their meat and drink, to "do the will of their FATHER in heaven."—This, you will own, is practical duty, in its most perfect form. And this is one benefit of the covenant; one of the privileges, purchased by our great MEDIATOR. Now it seems wondrous strange, that the *purchase* of an estate for you or me, should be reckoned the sure means, to *deprive* us of the possession, or *debar* us from the enjoyment.

How often is this weak surmise urged as an argument? All whose plausibility is owing, to a palpable mistake, or an egregious fallacy: to a supposed separation of things, which are absolutely inseparable; I mean, our justification and our sanctification.§—You are a philosopher, Theron. Try, if you can separate *gravity* from the stone, or *heat*

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* Matt. v. 17. † Tit. ii. 12. ‡ Heb. viii. 10

§ See Isai. xlv. 24. 1 Cor. i. 30. 1 Cor. vi. 11.

from the fire. If these bodies and their *essential* properties, if these causes and their *necessary* effects, are indissolubly connected; so are a genuine faith, and a conscientious obedience. To suppose them disunited, is as contrary to sound divinity; as it would be contrary to true philosophy, if you should talk of a burning substance that has no warmth, or of a solid substance that has no weight.—Never therefore, my dear friend, repeat this stale objection; never propagate this ungrounded clamour; nor adopt a cavil, which is altogether as unphilosophical, as it is anti-evangelical.

Ther. We digress from the point. My principal objection is not satisfied. I was observing that, according to *your* manner of stating the affair, salvation is no longer free, but founded upon works.—They are the works of the law, though CHRIST performs them. To maintain, that we are justified by these works, is to confound the difference between the law and the gospel.

Asp. Though we should admit your premises, we cannot acquiesce in your conclusion. The same righteousness, by which we are justified, is both legal and evangelical. *Legal*, in respect to CHRIST, who was made under the law, that he might obey all its commands. *Evangelical*, in respect to us, who work not ourselves, but believe in the great FULFILLER of all righteousness.—This is much of the same nature, with that other momentous distinction in divinity; salvation is freely given, yet dearly bought. *Freely given*, with regard to us; *dearly bought*, with regard to CHRIST. So, we are justified *by* works, if you look forward to our SURETY: we are justified *without* works, if you cast a retrospective view on ourselves.

Theron was resolving these points in his mind.—Aspasio, after a short interval, renewed the discourse.—I know not, whether my friend is yielding to my arguments, or searching after objections; deliberating upon a capitulation, or mustering his forces for a fresh sally. However, let me take this opportunity of dropping a hint, and suggesting a caution.

The grand reason, which inclines some people to reject this comfortable doctrine, lies concealed, if not in an ab-

solute disbelief of our LORD's eternal glory and GODHEAD, yet in unsettled apprehensions of it, or an habitual inattention to it.—If our SAVIOUR was not really GOD, as some writers, unhappily mistaken themselves, endeavour to persuade the world; it would be a reasonable practice, and entirely consistent with their scheme, to disavow the imputation of his righteousness. Because, upon such a supposition, his obedience was no more than bounden duty; in which there could not be the least pretence to merit, and which could be profitable to none but himself.—Whereas, if we verily believe him to be the incarnate GOD, his submission to the law becomes an act of *voluntary* humiliation. Which circumstance, together with the *transcendent* dignity of his person, render his obedience, not meritorious only, but inexpressibly and *infinitely* meritorious.

As the blood of CHRIST is called GOD's *own blood;** so the obedience of CHRIST was performed in the person of that adorable MEDIATOR, *who is* GOD *over all.*† He acted through the whole course of his life, and suffered death at the last, not merely as man, but as GOD-man; as JEHOVAH-JESUS; IMMANUEL.—Let me entreat you to remember, ever to remember this *all-important* article of our faith. And may the blessed SPIRIT of wisdom give us an understanding, to know the weighty, the extensive influence of so glorious a truth!

Ther. Far be it from me, to derogate from the dignity of our SAVIOUR's person, or to depreciate the merits of his mediatorial office. Place them as high, as words can reach; exalt them as far, as thought can soar; I stedfastly believe, you will still fall short, unmeasureably short, of their real worth.—But this consideration seems to increase the absurdity of your notion. For, if CHRIST's righteousness, *his very* righteousness be imputed; then, the true believers are altogether as righteous, as CHRIST himself. Whereas, if you maintain, that his righteousness is imputed only *as to its effects*, you will keep clear of this rock

* Acts xx. 28. † Rom. ix. 5.

Asp. This, I apprehend, will be like keeping clear of *Scylla*, only to fall foul upon *Charybdis*. It will drive us upon a method, which is insufficient, unnecessary, and apparently absurd.—*Insufficient*. For, in order to justification, that must be imputed, which answers the demands of the law. Now nothing can do this, but the righteousness, the very righteousness of CHRIST. Who, by his perfect obedience, *is the end of the law for righteousness*.—*Unnecessary*. What are the effects of the REDEEMER's righteousness? pardon of sin, and justification of our persons. When the righteousness of CHRIST is imputed, we have pardon, we have justification. These therefore need be imputed, because they are possessed; possessed, as the never-failing effects of an interest in the REDEEMER's righteousness.—Sanctification is another effect or fruit of CHRIST's righteousness. But how strange would it be, to talk of an imputed love of GOD! imputed purification of heart! imputed reformation of life! is not all this apparently *absurd?*

You are fixed in thought, my friend. That brow, which is generally open and expanded, I see contracted almost into a frown. Displeased, perhaps, with the morose and meagre business of argumentation.

Ther. No, Aspasio. I am not displeased; but I must confess, your arguments put my attention a little upon the stretch.

Asp. Well then; we will slacken the cords, and relieve your attention; by giving a familiar and comfortable view of this great transaction. It is represented in scripture, under the form of a judicial process. GOD himself is the judge: inconceivably holy to abhor, and inflexibly just to punish sin. A tribunal is erected, and inscribed with this motto; *HE will judge the secrets of men, and will in no wise clear the guilty*. The persons summoned to appear, are *Adam* and his children. The accusers are, the precepts of the law, the voice of conscience, and the tempter of the brethren, satan. All these advance and urge the charge; the charge of guilt; horrid, aggravated, damnable guilt. The charge is proved; is evidenced by ten thousand thousand facts; is absolutely undeniable. What can the

prisoner do? he has nothing to alledge in his own defence. He is dumb with conviction, and covered with confusion. Now therefore he expects the sentence of condemnation, and the execution of vengeance. But at this hour of need, a refuge is provided by grace, rich and free beyond all imagination. JESUS CHRIST the righteous, becomes an advocate for the speechless guilty wretch. IMMANUEL, the son of GOD, and son of man, pleads his cause. "Deliver him from destruction. I am his surety: "I have made a full atonement; I have brought in a complete righteousness."—This plea, coming from a divine and infinite person, is allowed to be valid. Coming from the representative and surety of the sinner, is admitted on his behalf. This is *imputation*.—Then follow the effects of divine imputation. A sentence is pronounced in the sinner's favor, absolving him from all guilt; releasing him from all penalties; declared him approved of GOD, and entitled to heaven. This is *justification*.—When the holy SPIRIT convinces the sinner, how much he stands in need of this blessing; teaches him to see clearly, that it is perfectly free for his acceptance; and enables him, by faith unfeigned, to apply it unto himself; then he is partaker of the gift, he is *justified*. Making continual use of this unspeakable benefit, he knows, that he is passed from death unto life; and by this knowledge, he is renewed,* he is *sanctified*.

This view will, I trust, both relax your attention, and comfort your heart.

Ther. I am obliged to you, Aspasio, for your illustration. But still the difficulty remains. To illustrate, is one thing; to demonstrate, is another. The light, which shews me the colour of a mountain, does not remove it from my paths. If CHRIST's very righteousness is imputed to believers, it still appears to me, that believers must be altogether as righteous as CHRIST himself.

* Col iii. 10.

Asp. Believers are partakers of that very righteousness, which renders CHRIST the delight of his almighty FATHER. They are interested in a spotless and everlasting righteousness. Nay; they are made the righteousness of GOD in CHRIST.—Notwithstanding these glorious privileges, believers are far from being altogether as righteous as CHRIST—unless you can suppose, that to be the receiver, is in all respects the same, as to be the author and finisher—unless, to have an imputed righteousness, for our own particular use, be altogether the same, as to have a mediatorial righteousness, for the justification of others—unless, you esteem it one and the same thing, to be made righteous ourselves by a meritorious surety, and to make others, even innumerable millions of sinners righteous, from our own stock of merit.—These are circumstances, which create, a material, a marvellous difference, between the righteousness of CHRIST and his people. Which yield room for a vast, for an immeasurable pre-eminence of his to theirs.

Ther. Admitting, that believers cannot make others righteous; yet, if CHRIST's obedience be accounted their righteousness, they seem to have no more need of pardoning mercy, than CHRIST himself.

Asp. Yes; because, *before* this imputation, they were sunk in guilt, and dead in sins. Because, *after* it, they are defective in their duty, and in many things offend.

Ther. Does not this doctrine render the intercession of our SAVIOUR superfluous? What occasion have they for an advocate with the FATHER, whose righteousness has neither blemish nor imperfection?

Asp. They stand in need of an advocate; first, that they may be brought home to the REPAIRER of their breaches,* and made partakers of his righteousness by a real faith. Next, that their faith may be preserved, notwithstanding all opposition, stedfast and immoveable; or rather may be carried on, victorious and triumphant, even to the end.

Ther. You say, "CHRIST performed all that was con-

* Isai. lviii. 12.

"ditional; then he *repented* for us, and *believed* for us. This must be admitted in pursuance of your principles. But this is so wild a notion, so contrary to reason and scripture, that to mention it, is to refute it.

Asp. CHRIST performed whatever was required by the covenant of works, both before it was violated, and after it had been transgressed. But neither *repentance* nor *faith* were comprehended in this institution. It knew nothing of the one, and it would not admit of the other.—It was not therefore necessary, neither indeed was it possible, for our immaculate and divine LORD, to repent of sin, or believe in a SAVIOUR. But he did unspeakably more. *He put away sin by the sacrifice of himself;** he is himself the SAVIOUR of all the ends of the earth; and he has power to bestow that blessed SPIRIT, which worketh faith, and produceth repentance.

Ther. However, from what you have advanced, this will unavoidably follow; that a man is to be justified, under the character of a notorious transgressor of the law; and justified under the character of a sinless observer of the law, And what is this, but a *glaring inconsistency?*

Asp. This is not precisely the thing, we mean. We maintain indeed, that a man is justified, as a transgressor; for *HE justifieth the ungodly*. But being justified, he enters upon a new state; he acquires a new character; he is no longer darkness and guilt, but righteousness and light in the LORD.—Neither is this inconsistent, but harmonious; if we take in the two *constituent parts* of justification, the acquittance from guilt, and a title to life. The former supposes us to be transgressors of the law; and such the highest saints in the world are. The latter requires us to be fulfillers of the law; and such must the inheritors of heaven be.—Much less is this inconsistent, if we consider believers, in their *personal* and *relative* capacity; as they are in themselves, and as they are in their SURETY. Notorious or confessed transgressors in themselves, they have a sinless obedience in CHRIST. The consciousness of

* Heb. ix. 26.

that, will be an everlasting motive to humility; the belief of *this*, an inexhaustible source of joy.

All this is no more inconsistent, than the union of a gloomy contexture, and a lightsome splendor, in those detached clouds, which float amidst the firmament. In themselves, they are a louring and dark collection of vapours; by the impression of the sun-beams, they are fair and bright as the polished silver.

Ther. After all, the imputation taught in scripture, is not the imputation of CHRIST's righteousness, but of our *own faith* Agreeably to the apostle's express declaration, *Abraham believed GOD, and it was imputed to him for righteousness.**

Asp. This objection admits the thing in dispute, though it controverts the way and manner of obtaining it. Admits the necessity of some *active, positive* righteousness, in order to our justification. In this particular, I am glad to agree with my Theron: and in this particular I believe, the generality of serious people agree with us both. Whenever their consciences are awakened; whenever they seek to establish the hope of eternal life, they constantly turn their eyes to *some* righteousness. Which, they apprehend, may, either in whole or in part, answer the demands of JEHOVAH's law. Some look to their own zealous reformation and *sincere* obedience. Others call in to their succour works of *supererogation* in this world, and the discipline of purgatory in another. My friend would assign this office to his *faith*.

Ther. Is this a proper answer to my objection, Aspasio? The text is point-blank against your tenet. You do wisely therefore, not to confront but elude the evidence.

Asp. I did not intend it for an answer; only as an *occasional* observation, Which, nevertheless, has a pretty close connection with the subect.—Neither would I use so mean a subterfuge, as to elude an argument, which I could not confute. If my friend had allowed me leisure to explain myself, this should have been my reply.

* Rom iv. 3.

It is the very nature of faith, to renounce all confidence in any work, duty, or qualification of our own. It is the very nature of faith, to claim itself, and to find the whole of our justifying righteousness in CHRIST alone. "Not "I says faith, but the infinite merit of my LORD,"—This is most forcibly demonstrated, and no less zealously inculcated, in the epistle to the *Phillipians*.* There the Apostle interprets himself, and settles the subject of our present enquiry. There he expressly declares that the ground of his own comfort, the cause of his own justification, was, not the *grace of faith*, but *the righteousness which is of GOD* by faith. Not the act of believing, but that grand and glorious object of a sinner's belief, *the LORD our righteousness*. And why should we not regard the narrative of his experience, as the very best exposition of his doctrine?

Besides; what was the faith of *Abraham*, to which the Apostle refers? and which he proposes, as the invariable model of our justification?—It was faith in the *promised seed*; even in JESUS CHRIST the righteous †. It was a firm persuasion, that this illustrious PERSON should spring from his loins; should be the author of eternal salvation to himself, and to a multitude of believers, numberless as the stars of heaven.

Accordingly, it is affirmed by the Evangelist, that *Abraham saw CHRIST's day*. He saw his meritorious obedience; saw it with an eye of faith; *and* applying it to his own soul, *rejoiced*. He rejoiced, you will observe, not in his own faith, but in CHRIST's day. An evident proof, that his justification was effected, not by the former but by the latter.—Let us then tread in the steps of that holy Patriarch; and we shall ascribe *nothing* to our faith; but *all* to the infinitely excellent righteousness of our REDEEMER.

Ther. Sure, Aspasio, you will not presume to correct inspiration! The inspired writer makes no mention of a REDEEMER's righteousness. He says expressly and positively—*It*, that is, *Abraham's* faith, and not any thing else, *was counted unto him for righteousness*.

* Phil. iii. 7, 8, 9.   † Compare Gen. xv. 5, 6. with Gal. iii 16.

Asp. True Theron; as those windows are reckoned, are counted, *the lights of your* house. And why? because they and not any thing else, illuminate? no; but because they afford a passage to the illuminating rays. Through them, the first and best of elements, is diffused into all your habitation.—So *we are saved by grace through faith;* by grace imputing, through faith accepting, the righteousness of JESUS CHRIST. Grace is the magnificent source of this nobler light; faith is the means of transmitting it into all the faculties of the soul.

When our LORD declares to the diseased woman, *thy faith hath made thee whole* *: how are we to understand his words? that the patient's belief, and not the agency of CHRIST, wrought the cure? to suppose this, would be extremely derogatory to the power of our great PHYSICIAN. And if we ascribe justification to the act of believing, this will be equally derogatory to the obedience of our great MEDIATOR. In the *former* case, CHRIST and his omnipotent operation, were all in all. In the *latter* case, CHRIST and his infinite merit, are all in all. In *both* cases, faith is only the eye to discern, or the hand to receive, the sovereign good.

Ther. I apprehend, the Apostle means, that Abraham's faith, instead of his own perfect obedience, was admitted as his justifying righteousness, and became the cause of his acceptance with GOD.

Asp. This, I think, cannot be the meaning. Because, faith is very particularly distinguished from the righteousness which is by faith, which is of faith.† These forms of expression, put an apparent difference between the evangelical faith, and the evangelical righteousness. Since, whatever is by another, and of another, cannot, without the greatest violence to reason and language, be reckoned that other.—If faith itself was the cause of our acceptance with GOD, then we should be justified, each by some-

* Matt. ix. 22.

† Rom. ix. 30. Phil. iii. 9.

thing of his own.* Whereas, it stands upon record in the scriptures; it is an adjudged point in the court of heaven; that *by ONE man's obedience many shall be made righteous.*† If faith itself was the cause of our acceptance with GOD, then we should be justified by a righteousness which is confessedly *imperfect.* For, who has ever attained to the highest degree of this virtue? or whose faith is not mixed with an alloy of unbelief?—In short, if faith itself was the matter of our justification, I see not how boasting could be excluded; how the law could be magnified; or what reason the apostle could have, to account all things, but the righteousness of CHRIST, meaner than dross.‡

Say not, that we presume to correct inspiration. We only interpret the inspired word in an harmonious *consistency* with itself. This sense is agreeable to the prevailing doctrine, and to the current language of scripture.—To the *prevailing doctrine;* which is A BELIEVING IN HIM, WHO JUSTIFIETH THE UNGODLY. Sift and examine this expression *Him* who justifieth. You will find, that the work is CHRIST's; CHRIST's and no other's. The HOLY GHOST assigns not the least share, not so much as a co-efficiency, to any other imaginable cause. Faith therefore, if it presumes to arrogate this exalted prerogative, or if it pretends to the least part in this important business, is a sacrilegious usurper.—To the current language; as when David prays, purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean;‖ as when GOD is called our fear,§ our hope,¶ our joy.** In these places, the instrument is put for the agent, the act for the object. So, in the passage before us, the *act* of faith is put for the *object* of faith. It must be understood, not absolutely, but as some divines speak, objectively, instrumentally, relatively.

* Faith, as an act or duty, is properly our own, and as such it is represented in scripture. O woman, great is thy faith, Matt. xv. 28. JESUS seeing their faith, Matt. ix. 2. After I heard of your faith, Eph. i, 15.

† Rom. v. 19. ‡ Phil. iii. 8. ‖ Psal. li. 7.

§ Gen. xxxi. 42, 53. ¶ Psal. lxxi. 5. ** Psal. xliii 4.

Ther. In the name of wonder, what can you mean by this heap of harsh and obscure expressions! let me entreat you, Aspasio, to speak in your own style, not in the grim dialect of Aquinas. I have an irreconcileable aversion to these scholastic terms. They are the barbarisms of divinity. I know but one use, they are fitted to serve; that is, to perplex and puzzle a cause, you cannot maintain. Somewhat like the liquor, which a certain fish, when closely pursued, is said to emit: by which the water is darkened, and the foe eluded.

Asp. This, Theron, is the meaning of our uncouth phrases: it is not faith itself, which justifies; but that righteousness, which faith continually views; which faith delightfully apprehends; and on which it finally terminates.

To be plainer still—we are justified by faith, in the same manner, as we are fed by the hand, or nourished by the mouth. Neither the hand nor the mouth are the cause of our sustenance, but instruments only, that of conveying it, this of receiving it.—If an apostle affirms, we are justified by faith: faith itself declares, in the LORD I have righteousness. Put these passages together, and you will have the true sense of our doctrine, and the true doctrine of the gospel.

When Themistocles fled from the persecution of his own countrymen, what recommended him to the protection of king Admetus?—Not his name; that was obnoxious—not his actions; they had been hostile—but the person of the young prince; whom the distressed refugee caught up in his arms; and, charged with these credentials, presented himself to [illegible] royal parent.—So, faith recommends to GOD, an[illegible]ifies the soul, not for itself, or its own worth; b[illegible]ccount of what it embraces, what it presents, and [illegible] it pleads.

Ther. Is [illegible] this a fanciful distinction, and an excessive refinement? has it any foundation in scripture?

Asp. It is implied in almost all the representations of CHRIST, and all the descriptions of faith, which occur in the s[illegible] writings.

C[illegible]s likened to *cloathing*; and believers are said *to h*[illegible] *CHRIST*. Now, it cannot be the act of

putting on, that covers our bodies, or keeps them warm; but the commodious garment, which is wore. He is compared to *bread: I am the bread of life.** Shall we say? It is the act of eating, which strengthens the constitution, and recruits our spirits. No surely; but the food eaten and digested.—CHRIST was typefied by the *city of refuge;*† and sinners, by the obnoxious manslayer. Who, if he fled to one of those privileged abodes; and there remained, was safe. No prosecution against him could be valid: he had nothing to fear from the avenger of blood. In this case, was it the bare act of flying, which screened the criminal? by no means: this conveyed him to a place of security. But the place itself was his sanctuary, his asylum, his safeguard.

Faith is styled, *a receiving of* CHRIST:‡ *as many as received him, to them gave he power,* to them he granted the privilege, and the high prerogative, *to become the sons of* GOD. The office of faith is, according to this definition, not to contribute this quota, much less to deposit the whole sum, but to take and use the inestimable gift.—Faith is called, *a looking unto* JESUS;‖ in allusion, I suppose, to the famous expedient, provided for the wounded *Israelites.*§ Our crucified LORD was prefigured, by the brazen serpent; our guilt, by the stings of the fiery serpents; and our faith, by looking to the miraculous remedy. Did the healing power, I would ask, reside in the mere act of viewing? no: but in the emblem of a dying SAVIOUR, elevated on the pole, and ordained for the recovery of the people. *Here* all the efficacy was lodged. *From hence* it was all derived. The action of the eye, like the office of faith, was only to fetch home, and apply the sanative virtue.

* John vi. 35. † Numb. xxxv. 18.

‡ John i. 12. See also Rom. v. 17. ‖ Heb. 12. 2.

§ Numb. xxi. 8.

Ther. Suppose all you advance, to be true; and all you maintain, to be solid; what is the advantage of such a distinction?

Asp. Much. It preserves, unshared and inviolate, the honor of GOD our SAVIOUR. It establishes, on an immoveable foundation, the hope and the comfort of a christian.—An instance, which lately occurred, will explain my meaning. A certain writer, treating of that tremendous day, when GOD will arise to administer eternal judgment; when he will come to be avenged of his unfaithful servants, and to destroy his avowed enemies; exhorts us all to labour after a living faith—"which alone, says he, "can carry us safe to the harbour, amidst the universal de-"luge of woe, which is going to overflow the earth."

This exhortation, you see, ascribes every thing to an act of our own; to man's faith, not to the REDEEMER's righteousness. This, therefore, must greatly dishonor the all-sufficient REDEEMER, and his infinite merit.—As this act of our own is confessedly imperfect and changeable, it affords but a crazy bottom, on which to embark our everlasting interests. A consideration, which must damp our joy, and often fill us with uneasy suspicions.—Whereas, let CHRIST be the vessel of preservation and conveyance; let faith signify our entering upon it, and our continuing in it; then all is regular, and all is secure. Salvation is of the LORD. CHRIST has the honor and glory. While we have an ark, which no waves can overwhelm, no rocks can shatter.

Once more, therefore, let me observe, in pursuance of this important remark; that faith is represented as *laying hold* on GOD our SAVIOUR;* *leaning* upon our BELOVED;† *cleaving* to the LORD.‡—Please to take notice of yonder vine. Its shoots are weak, and its branches flimsy. Being absolutely unable to support themselves, they are furnished with a very remarkable set of *claspers*. Which, like so many fingers, lay hold on the pegs of the wall, or fasten themselves to the poles within their reach.

* Isai. xxvii. 5. † Cant. viii. 5. ‡ Acts xi. 23.

Without such a provision, the boughs must lie prostrate on the ground, and be exposed to the insults of every foot. Whereas, by this kind contrivance of nature, so *creeping* a plant, will climb into the air, and enjoy the breeze; so *feeble* a plant, will stand out the winter, and defy the storms.—An instructive admonition to sinners! and no contemptible illustration of faith, especially in its principal and most distinguishing employ! Thus let us apprehend the blessed JESUS; hold us fast by our adored REDEEMER; cleave to his ineffable worthiness, as those twining tendrils, by repeated circumvolutions, adhere to their substantial supporters. Then shall we rise, by merits not our own, from the most abject and miserable condition, to a a state of everlasting honor and joy.

Ther. Some people, I believe, would hardly forbear smiling at the peculiarity of your diction; and might be inclined to call your discourse *canting*, rather than *reasoning*. For my own part, I must acknowledge, that, as all your peculiar phrases are derived from the scriptures, I hear them with reverence, and without the least disposition to sneer. Was my friend delivering a *Latin* oration, it would be a sufficient warrant for any of his expressions, to prove that they came from the *Ciceronian* mint. And will it not be an equally sufficient authority, for any modes of speech used in a theological essay, to alledge that they bear the stamp of the *Bible?*

Asp. Thanks to my friend—replied Aspasio, making a low bow—thanks for his indulgent concession. Yet let him know, that he has manifested his judgment, as much as he has exercised his candour. The scripture is the rule, not only of our faith, but of our language also, whenever we would explain that sacred subject.—Can any expressions be more proper or more emphatical, than those which unerring wisdom has selected for our us? Impossible! Therefore we are commanded to *hold fast* *form of sound words*,* as well as a system of sound principles.—Can any phrases express divine things, with greater precision and

* 2 Tim. i. 13.

perspicuity, than those which the divine SPIRIT has employed for this purpose? arrogance itself dares not entertain the thought. Therefore we think it unexceptionably right, to declare the truths of the gospel, *not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the* HOLY GHOST *teacheth* *

Ther. Though I make no objection to your language, I have yet another scruple with regard to your doctrine.—Do the *antient fathers* adopt or inculcate this imputed righteousness? if it was so important an article of our faith, surely it could not be unknown in those early ages, which were so near the apostolical fountain. It would not have been omitted by those zealous preachers, who chose to endure all the rigours of persecution, rather than renounce their holy profession.

Asp. I think, it were sufficient to answer this question by asking another—do the apostles, does the HOLY SPIRIT of GOD speaking in scripture, inculcate this doctrine, or display this privilege? if so, we need not be very solicitous for any farther authority. *To the law and to the testimony,*† is our grand, our final appeal. Amidst all the darkness and uncertainty, which evidently run through the writings of the best of men, this is our unspeakable happiness, that *we have a more sure word of prophecy; to which we do well to take heed.*‡

However; to be a little more particular—it cannot be expected, that we should find many passages in those pious authors, very strong and very explicit, upon the point. Because, in their days, it was not so professedly opposed; and thererore could not be so exactly discussed, as in later ages. Nevertheless, they have left enough behind them, to avouch the substance of what we assert; *that a man is not justified by any works, duties, or righteousness of his own, but holy by faith in* JESUS CHRIST.—I cannot say, that I have charged my memory with their very words; and for that reason, must not attempt at present to make any citation. But, when a proper opportunity offers, and their works are

* 1 Cor. ii. 13. † Isai. viii. 20. ‡ 2 Pet. i 19.

before me, I may possibly produce a few of their testimonies.

In the mean time, I cannot mention a set of writers, whose attestation will, I imagine, carry as much weight with my friend, as the united voice of the *Greek* and *Latin* fathers.

Ther. Who are they?

Asp. Our venerable *reformers.* The Homilies composed by those excellent divines, are as express to my purpose, as they are unexceptionable in their evidence. This is their language—" The true understanding of this doctrine, " *we be justified freely by faith without works,* is not, that " this our *act to believe,* or this our faith in CHRIST, doth " justify us: for that were to count ourselves to be justified " by some act or virtue, that is *with ourselves.* But the " true meaning thereof, is, that although we hear GOD's " word, and believe it; although we have hope and faith, " charity and repentance, and do never so many good " works: yet we must renounce the merit of all our vir- " tues and good deeds, as things that be far too weak and " insufficient, to deserve remission of sin, and our justifica- " tion. We must trust only in GOD's mercy, and that " sacrifice which our high priest and saviour JESUS " CHRIST, the SON of GOD, offered for us upon the " cross."

The Homily subjoins a very apposite illustration; which may conclude our discourse with perfect propriety, and I hope with equal efficacy.—" So that as St. *John Babtist,* " although he were never so virtuous and godly a man, yet " in the matter of forgiving sin, he did put the people " from him, and appoint them unto CHRIST; saying thus " unto them, behold! yonder *is the LAMB of GOD, which* " *taketh away the sins of the world:* even so, as great and " as godly a virtue as the lively faith is, yet it *putteth us* " *from itself,* and remitteth us unto CHRIST, for to have " only by him remission of sins or justification. So that " our faith in CHRIST, as it were, saith unto us thus, it is " not I that take away your sins, but it is CHRIST only; " and to him only I send you for that purpose, forsaking " therein all your good words, thoughts, and works, and only putting your trust in CHRIST."

Ther. If there be any tolerable sense of the notion under debate, I think, it must be understood as follows.—CHRIST's performance of the law of his mediation, or, in other words, his unsinning obedience to the moral law, and the spotless sacrifice of himself to the vindictive justice of GOD; these are the *only* valuable considerations, on account of which, the *gracious* GOD restores guilty creatures to a state of acceptance with his divine MAJESTY.

Asp. If this is what you mean by the *law of meditation*, I am far from denying your proposition. I would never desire to wrangle; but, if possible, to acquiesce. I would not wish to espy faults, but rather to find propriety, in my Theron's sentiments. May his faith, which is *thus far* advanced, be carried on by grace, till it is completed in glory!—That unsinning obedience, and that spotless sacrifice, are indeed the only valuable, they are also the *truly*, or rather the *infinitely* valuable consideration. The obedience being performed in *our name*, and the sacrifice offered in *our stead*, have fully merited for us the remission of sins, and the enjoyment of life: and all this, not only from the gracious, but even from the *just*, the faithful, the righteous GOD.

But then, they must be *imputed*, in order to furnish us with a claim, and invest us with a right, to the purchased privileges.—Suppose them not imputed; and what becomes of our *interest* in them? they are like a medicine prepared, but not applied.—Suppose them imputed; and they lay a firm, an apparent, a rational *foundation*, for every pleasing hope, and for every heavenly blessing.

Ther. I fear, I have acknowledged too much.—My thoughts fluctuate. My mind is unsettled.—I would not disbelieve any doctrine of the gosple. Yet—what shall I say? while I listen to your reasoning, I am half a convert. —When I recollect the objections, I revert to my first opinion.

Of this, however, I am convinced, that human righteousness is *insufficient* for our justification. Here your arguments have carried their point. I shall henceforth place my hopes of everlasting happiness, not upon any works of my own, but upon the free goodness, and unbounded bene-

ficence, of the supreme BEING. Pursuant to that maxim of scripture, *the gift of GOD is eternal life.*

Asp. You do well, *Theron*, to expect eternal life as the gift of GOD, not as the wages of your own obedience. But be pleased to remember, that all the gifts of grace, through perfectly *free* to sinners, are founded upon a grand and inestimable *price*, paid by their SAVIOUR.—Are they entirely absolved from guilt? It is because CHRIST gave his life for their ransom.—Are they heard with acceptance when they pray? it is because their exalted HIGH-PRIEST intercedes in their behalf.—Are they completely justified, and instated in endless bliss? It is because their REDEEMER's consummate righteousness, is the glorious equivalent for this and every other blessing.*—Therefore, when you mention eternal life as the gift of GOD, you should not forget to add with the holy apostle, *through* JESUS CHRIST our LORD.†

——————Well, my *Theron;* what say you farther? Is your quiver emptied? are your scruples satisfied? may I interpret this silence, as an act of assent?

Ther. Observe, how the *ranunculuses*, on yonder gay parterre, have contracted their full blown tufts; and the *tulips*, now the dews are descending, have closed their expanded cups.—Such is the state of my thoughts. They are all bent inwards; *collected* in themselves; and *pondering* upon your discourse. Which has inclined me, before I was aware, to contemplate, rather than talk.—You will excuse my thoughtfulness, *Aspasio.* Or, if it wants an apology, you must blame yourself. For, had your reasons been less cogent, my attention had been more disengaged.

Asp. My dear *Theron*, I shall only wish, in allusion to your own simile, and in the language of the best of books; that these truths may *distil as the dew*‡ upon your mind, *lie all night upon your branches.*§ This, I am persuaded, is

* "I should fear, says a pious writer, to look at that great GOD and SAVIOUR, "who has suffered so much for my soul, did I not allow his atonement to be of infinite "value, and an equivalent to any demands from the FATHER."

† Rom. vi. 23. ‡ Deut. xxxii. 2. § Job. xxix 19.

the only way to have all your comforts *green before the sun*, and all your virtues *flourish as an herb*. Whereas, under the influence of any other faith, I am afraid, they will be as the garden, that is visited with a draught;. or as the leaves, that are smitten with a blast.

Ther. I shall attentively consider, both your doctrine, and your arguments. Which that I may execute, with more ease, and to better purpose, be pleased to *sum up*, in a few words, the substance of what has passed.—This done, it will be time to withdraw. The flowers, you see, are our monitors. They have folded up their robes, and veiled their beauties. A custom which they seldom use, till the rising damps render it unsafe, for their master to be among them; and the surrounding gloom renders it difficult, for his eye to distinguish them.

Asp. You could not oblige me more, than by giving me such a command.—We trust for salvation,

Not on our own *external duties*. This were to build our house upon the sand. Which, when the rains descend, when the floods rise, when the winds blow with tempestuous violence, will certainly fall; and bury the builder, with all his vain hopes, in irretrievable ruin.

Not on the *sincerity* of our *hearts*. This, if opposed to CHRIST, and made the rival of his merits, will be a " despised broken idol." *Despised*, by the infinitely sublime and majestic RULER of the world. *Broken*, with regard to the stress we lay, or the confidence we repose, on so deceitful a prop. No more able to stand in the judgment of the great day, than *Dagon* was able to maintain his station, before the ark of the LORD GOD of hosts.*

Not upon our *Faith*. This is often weak, as the rickety child: sometimes quite faint, like a person in a deep swoon: always imperfect, like every other performance of ours. Alas! to what afflicting fears, to what grievous despondency, should I be perpetually liable, if my own faith was the ground of my justification. Blessed be the FATHER of mercies! we have a surer support. Not upon faith, but

* 1 Sam. v. 3, 4.

upon its gracious AUTHOR, and glorious OBJECT, is the hope of *Israel* founded. Yet

Not upon our LORD's righteousness, considered only as passive; but upon his active and passive obedience united. All that he *did*, in conformity to the commands of the law; and all that he *suffered*, in submission to its penalty. Both which, immensely dignified by his divine nature, are a basis for our faith, which nothing can shake; are a foundation for our affiance, which can never be removed.—Nothing else, in any creature, or in all worlds, could expiate the *least sin*. This, not only expiates all sin, but gives a title, to *every blessing*—to the blessings of grace, and of glory—of evangelical holiness, and everlasting happiness.





DIALOGUE XI.



ASPASIO.

I HAVE often purposed, and as often forgot, to ask my Theron—what picture he was so attentively surveying, when I stole unperceived upon him, in this favourite arbour?*

Ther. I was indulging a pensive pleasure, in viewing the ruins, and contemplating the fate of *Babylon*—that renowned and opulent city! once the residence of the *Assyrian* monarchs, and capital of one of the greatest empires in the world. The draught I held in my hand, represented some of its remains. And indeed this was the very last subject, which employed my thoughts. In the morning, my son brought me his observations upon the scene; which I have just now been revising.

For, I frequently set him, to exercise his judgment, or display his fancy, on remarkable passages, which occur in history—He was lately commissioned to determine a controversy, between the illustrious *Leonidas*, and the less celebrated *Pædaretus*. This was the point in debate: which of them discovered the *truest* generosity of spirit, and the *most heroic* love of their country? the former, who exposed

* See Dialogue V.

his life, nay, devoted himself to death, in its defence? or the latter, who, when he was candidate for a seat among the three hundred, and lost his election; instead of being chagrined or dissatisfied, went home unfeignedly rejoicing, "That there were found in *Sparta* three hundred men, "more worthy than himself?"—The task of this day was, to give a *descriptive picture* of those wonderful ruins.

Asp. Pray, let me have the pleasure of hearing the young gentleman's performance.

Ther. It will be too long, and too puerile: tire your patience, and offend your taste.

Asp. I don't use to make either of these complaints, when I am entertained with Theron's compositions. And, as the son has so much of his father's genius, I am not at all apprehensive of any such disappointment.—We have a most agreeable situation, and more than an hour's leisure. I must therefore repeat my request.

Ther. 'Tis true, I have retouched the sketch: which may render it somewhat more tolerable. And since you persist in your demand, I will read the paper.—Only desiring some allowance for a little *luxuriancy* of imagination. Which, in young writers, it may be adviseable to indulge, rather than repress. As age and judgment will, probably, come with the pruning-knife, and make the proper retrenchments.—I must farther observe, that, contrary to the custom which prevails in our schools, I generally choose to have him express his sentiments in *English*. Because, it is in *this* language, he must communicate his own, and become acquainted with the ideas of his neighbours. Because, to acquire some good degree of propriety and fluency in this his native tongue, will be incomparably more serviceable, than to speak *Latin* with the *Terentian* elegance, or to write it with the *Ciceronian* copiousness.

Is this *Babylon?* the glory of kingdoms! the beauty of the *Chaldean* excellency!

> Where once the gorgeous East, with richest hand,
> Shower'd on her kings barbaric pearl and gold.

How is she fallen! fallen from the height of magnificence, into the abyss of confusion! what was once the object of

universal admiration, is now become a spectacle of astonishment and horror.

The palace, where majesty sat enthroned like some terrestrial deity, is a heap of rubbish: no longer distinguished by an air of superior elegance, but by stronger and more melancholy marks of departed dignity.*—Where, the nobles of that sumptuous court, trailed along the marble pavements their robes of purple and embroidery; there, the crested snake hisses, or the fierce envenomed adder glides.

How disgraced is the room of state; and what contempt, deserved contempt, is poured upon the banqueting-house! in the first, the haughty monarch, "who said in his heart, *I am, and none else besides me*,†" gave audience to cringing sycophants and adoring vassals. In the last, hospitality, forgetting her generous character, acted as an infamous procuress for debauchery; and luxury and lewdness almost brutalized *a people*, profusedly *given to pleasures*. Now, thorns over-run the circumference, and "desolation sits in "the threshold of them both."—Where are the roofs of ivory, painted with vermillion, and adorned with sculpture? the radiant roofs, whose lamps of burnished silver, pendent in many a blazing row, yielded light as from another sky? swept from their foundations, they lie clotted with defiling dirt, or clasped with tangling briars.—*Music* no longer pours her harmony, through the spacious and pompous apartment; but the night-owl, nestling in some cleft of the ruins, screams her harsh and portentous dissonance. *Joy* no longer leads up the sprightly dance, amidst the lustre of that artificial day; but the solitary bat flits in silent circles, or flaps her sooty wings.—All those gay delights—let the *sons* of *sensuality* hear the tale, and take warning from the catastrophe!—all those gay delights are extinguished, like one of their feeblest tapers; which, having illuminated for a while the festive assembly, shone it-

* Benjamin, a Jew of Tudela in his itinerary, written about the year of our LORD 1170, tells us—"That he was upon the place, where this city formerly stood, and "found it wholly desolated and destroyed. Only some ruins of Nebuchadnezzar's pa-"lace were still remaining; but men were afraid to go near them, by reason of the many "serpents and scorpions, that were then in the place."

† Isai. xlvii. 10.

self to the edges of the exhausted socket, and in a moment flashed into stench and darkness.

The walls, were cemented with bitumen, and consolidated into the firmness of a flint. The towers were more like the everlasting mountains, than the work of human hands. The inhabitants, confiding in such prodigious bulwarks, defied the approaching enemy; and looked down with a fearless disdain, on the army of besiegers. But now the prophet's threatening is most terribly fulfilled; *Babylon is fallen, is fallen.** *Her broad walls are utterly broken.*† And all her fortifications, through strong and stable, as the united productions of the quarry and the forest could make them, *are demolished; are laid low; are brought to the ground, even to the dust.*‡

Where are the gates, the grand and glittering gates,‖ which admitted the triumphant hosts, or poured forth their numerous legions against the day of battle? not one trace remains, to tell the inquisitive stranger; "here the spacious avenues opened: here the massy portals rose."—Commodious walks, in which the clustering merchants raised the busy hum, and planned the schemes of commerce; ample streets, in which industry drove the toiling car, or smote the sounding anvil; are shrouded with matted grass, or buried beneath the rankest weeds. Silence, in both places, a sullen silence reigns: and inactivity, a death-like inactivity, slumbers.

What is become of those *hanging gardens*, which, for curious contrivance, and stupendous labour, were never equaled in any nation under heaven? *terraces*, that overlooked the tallest houses? *parterres*, exalted to the clouds, and opening their flowery beauties in that strange region; *groves*, whose very roots were higher than the tops of the loftiest trees!—They are now smitten by a dreadful blast.

* Isai. xxi. 9. † Jer. li. 58.

‖ JEHOVAH promises to make Cyrus master of Babylon, he speaks in this very remarkable and particularizing manner; "I will break in pieces before thee the gates of brass.—Isai. xlv. 2.

Their beauty is decayed, like a withered leaf. Their very being is gone, *like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors; which the wind carrieth away, and its place is no where found.** What was once the favourite retreat of a queen, and the admiration of the whole world, is now a nest for poisonous reptiles, and a kennel for ravenous beasts.—The traveller, instead of expatiating with delight, where this *pensile paradise* flourished, is struck with horror; keeps at a trembling distance; and, lifting his eyes to heaven, as he surveys the rueful spot, cries out; *righteous art thou, O LORD, and true are thy judgments!*

Here stands an *obelisk*, maimed by the stroke of resolving years, like a mountain-oak shattered by the flaming bolt. Another, all unhinged and quite disjointed, seems to tremble before every blast that blows.--There, the *pyramid;* firm as the solid rock, and stedfast, one would have thought, as the prepetual hills; wrenched from its mighty base, is tumbled headlong in enormous ruin, and has crushed many a structure by its fall.—See, yonder, the *triumphal arch:* which exhibited, through its extensive and beautiful bend, an advantageous view of the firmament. It was, once, the graceful memorial of some celebrated victory; it is, now, converted into a trophy of a very different kind. Such is its proud aspiring brow; and nothing remains, but two uneven, battered, ragged stumps; which serve to recognize the destructive ravages of time; or rather, the irresistible vengeance of heaven.

Spires, that pierced the clouds, and shot into the skies, are levelled with the trodden soil. On *pinnacles*, to which the strong-winged bird could hardly soar, the groveling worm crawls, and the sordid snail leaves her slimy track. *Baths*, that contained the translucent wave, and were so often perfumed with odoriferous unguents, are choaked with filth; the grand *colonade*, that surrounded them, is shivered to pieces; and the elevated *dome*, that covered them, is dashed to the ground.—Where the public *aqueducts* conveyed cleanliness and health, along their crystal

* Dan. ii. 35.

currents; there, croaking vermin swarm among the weeds, and noisome exhalations steam from the mire.—I look round on the plains, the almost boundless plains, on which this superb imperial city arose? they were once a magazine of plenty, a source of vegetable riches, for their royal mistress. What are they now! a foul, incurable morass; a dead, stagnating lake. *A possession for the bittern, and pools of water.**

August and stately *temples*, which seemed to affect the neighbourhood of the skies †, are prostrate in the very dust. —Who can point the spot, where the consecrated victim bled, or the sacred fire glowed: where the sceptered image lifted its majestic head, or the venerating crouds bowed the suppliant knee ‡? Degraded are those splendid vanities, and cast (according to the denunciation of the sacred oracles) *to the bats and to the moles* ||. All is low; low as the spurious dignity of the Idols they complimented; low *as the straw, that is trodden down for the dunghill* §.

Sepulchres, venerable repositories of the dead; awful mansions, destined to everlasting concealment; are cleft and rent asunder. They disclose the horrid secrets of the pit, and frightfully yawn upon the blasted day. Possibly, some ravenous creature lurks within, that has already rifled the tomb of its hero; given the putrid bones a new grave; and waits only for the approach of night, to repeat his dirge in yells.—*Inscriptions*, designed to perpetuate some illustrious character, or eternize some heroic deed, are blended in

* Isai. xiv. 23.

† A tower in the temple of *Belus*, and dedicated to his worship, was most amazingly high. It consisted of eight piles of building, erected one above another. It arose to the elevation of six hundred feet perpendicular And is thought, by the learned *Bochart*, to have been part of that superb work, which was begun when *the whole earth was of one language*: but miscarried, or rather was providentially defeated, by the confusion of tongues. In this structure there were doubtless very strong traces of that arrogant boast; *let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach to heaven*, Gen. xi. 4.

‡ Alluding to that prodigious instance of profuseness, ostentation, and idolatrous madness, *the golden image set up in the plain of* Dura: *whose height* (that is, the height of the statue and pedestal taken together) *threescore cubits*, Dan. iii. i. See PRIDEAUX's *connection*, Vol. I. p. 95, &c. p. 567, &c.

|| Isai. ii. 20. § Isai. xxv. 10.

the promiscuous mass. In vain, would the prying antiquary search for a legible or consistent sentence: in vain, attempt to find the memorable names of a *Nebuchadnezzar* or a *Nimrod*. These, though engraved on plates of brass, or cut in blocks of marble, are lost amidst the stupendous lumber: as prints on the unsteady sand are effaced, when returning tides smooth the furrowed beach.

Here and there a straggling cypress rises, as it were with funeral solemnity, amidst the waste.* Somewhat like the black plumes, nodding over the mournful hearse, they augment the sadness of the scene, and throw a deep horror on all below.—No human voice is heard, nor human face seen, amidst these desolated heaps. Too dreary, even for the roam of hoary hermit, or the cell of gloomy monk. Abandoned they are, totally abandoned, to the dominion of solitude; or else, to the unmolested resort of shaggy monsters, and feathered hags: which stun the midnight hours—*these*, with their importunate shrieks—*those*, with their execrable howls.

See! to what a despicable, what an abhorred state, the proudest monuments of earthly grandeur, and the most costly apparatus for earthly felicity, may be reduced! a pregnant and alarming proof, that, for *lasting honor*, or *real happiness*,

They build too low, who build beneath the skies.

Asp. I very much approve the choice of your subject. The ruins of *Persepolis*, would have given us a view of magnificence in abasement. The ruins of *Palmyra*, might have shewn us elegance in the dust. But the ruins of *Babylon* display at once, magnificence and elegance under an eclipse, *scripture* and *revelation* in their glory.—The de-

* *Rauwolf*, a *German* traveller, who passed that way, in the year of our LORD 1574, says; "This country is so dry and barren, that it cannot be tilled; and so bare, that I "should have doubted, whether the potent Babylon did stand there, if I had not known "it by several antient and delicate antiquities, that are still standing hereabout in great "desolation."

struction of this city, which was absolutely unequalled in every instance of dignity, and seemingly invincible by any enemy, must certainly have been looked upon as the *most improbable* of all events. Nevertheless its utter destruction was decreed by JEHOVAH, and denounced by his prophet, several ages before the execution took place. The awful *sentence* was not only denounced, but recorded; and is still remaining in the public archives of our religion.

Ther. Where is this sentence recorded, and remaining?

Asp. In the prophecy of *Isaih*. And not only recorded, but in the most circumstancial manner, and with a minute detail of the horrible desolations. These are the words of the inspired writer; "BABYLON, the glory of king-
" doms, the beauty of the Chaldees excellency, shall be as
" when GOD overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall
" never be inhabited; neither shall the Arabian pitch tent
" there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there.
" But wild beasts of the desart shall lie there, and their hou-
" ses shall be full of doleful creatures, and owls shall dwell
" there, and the satyrs shall dance there. And the wild
" beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and
" dragons in their pleasant palaces."*

In the two first sentences, is comprised the most finished picture of prosperity and grandeur. *The glory of kingdoms;* beyond every other royal seat, spacious, ornamented, and wealthy; revered by many conquered and tributary dominions, as their mistress, and their sovereign.—*The beauty of the Chaldees excellency:* the *Chaldeans*, who excelled all the nations of the earth in riches, in splendor, and in power, *even they* gloried in this imperial city. This was the highest honor of the most illustrious, and chief strength of the most victorious people; fairest, where all was conspicuously fair; noblest, where all was supereminently noble.—Yet this distinguished, this crowning city, *shall*, at the blasting of the breath of JEHOVAH, be totally, totally destroyed, even *as when GOD overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.*

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* Isai. xiii. 11, 20, 21, 22.

In describing the overthrow, the prophet is equally admirable; and rises by a most judicious gradation, into all the pomp of horror. *q. d.* " Now, indeed, it is thronged
" with citizens; but, the hour is coming, when it shall
" be entirely depopulated, and not so much as a single
" inhabitant left.—Lest you should think, that in process
" of time it may be re-edified, and again abound with
" joyful multitudes, *it shall never be inhabited* more; no,
" *never be dwelt in* any more, *from generation to generation;*
" but shall continue a dismal waste, through all succeeding
" ages.—A waste so dismal, that none of the neighbour-
" ing *shepherds* shall *make their fold*, or find so much as an
" occasional shelter for their flocks; where kings, gran-
" dees, and crouds of affluent citizens, were wont to re-
" pose themselves in profound tranquillity. Even the rude
" and roving *Arabian* shall not venture to *pitch his tent*,
" nor be able to procure for himself the poor accommoda-
" tion of a night's lodging; where millions of polite people
" basked in the sunshine of profuse prosperity.—In short;
" it shall neither be habitable, nor accessible; but a *dwel-
" ling-place for dragons, and a court for owls; and asto-
" nishment, and a hissing.** What was once the *golden
" city*,† and the metropolis of the world, shall be an ever-
" lasting scene of desolation; a fearful monument of divine
" vengeance, and an awful admonition to human pride."

All this is foretold in scripture; and, though to human appearance impossible, though to human apprehension incredible, was, in the appointed time, most minutely accomplished. The memorials and evidences of the accomplishment remain to this very day. They are so *authentic*, that the most inquisitive curiosity cannot doubt; so *incontestable*, that the most bigotted incredulity dares not deny. Should not all this teach us, to reverence the authority, to admire the wisdom, and confide in the promises, of that most sure and infallible word?

I know, you are not fond of compliments, Theron. Therefore, instead of speaking my opinion of your son's

* Jer. li 37. † Isai. xiv. 4.

performance, I will endeavour to return your favor.—You have entertained me with an account of the most memorable ruins, extant in the material world. Let me present my friend with a picture of ruins, no less *remarkable*, far more *deplorable*, and unspeakably *interesting* to us all. I shall give it, in the colouring of a great master; whose works, this very day, I happened to be perusing.

The passage displays a doctrine, of the utmost importance in the christian scheme; and by one of the finest pieces of imagery to be met with in elegant writing. I think, it may be looked upon, as a *practical improvement* of *Eugenio's* declamation. It pleased me so much, that I transcribed it; an I make no apology for reading it, because I shall expect your thanks.—Only let me hint, that it considers the human soul, as originally an habitation of GOD through the SPIRIT; and then, speaking of its fallen condition, proceeds.

" That he *hath withdrawn himself*, and left *this his temple* desolate, we have many sad and plain proofs before " us. The *stately ruins* are visible to every eye, that bear " in the front (yet extant) this doleful inscription; HERE " GOD ONCE DWELT. Enough appears of the admirable " frame and structure of the *soul of man*, to shew the divine presence did sometime reside in it; more than " enough of vicious *deformity*, to proclaim he is now *retired* and *gone*. The *lamps* are extinct, the *altar* overturned; the *light* and *love* are now vanished, which did " the one *shine* with so heavenly brightness; the other " *burn*, with so pious fervour. The *golden candlestick* is " displaced, and thrown away as an useless thing, to make " room for the throne of the *prince of darkness*. The *sacred incense*, which sent rolling up in clouds its rich perfumes, is exchanged for a poisonous hellish vapour; and " here is, *instead of a sweet savour, a stench*. The comely " order of this house is turned all into confusion. The " *beauties of holiness* into *noisome impurities*. The *house* " *of prayer* to a *den of thieves*, and that of the worst and " most horrid kind; for every *lust* is a *thief*, and every " *theft* is *sacrilege*. Continual rapine and robbery is committed upon *holy things*. The noble powers, which were

" designed and dedicated to *divine contemplation* and *de-*
" *light*, are alienated to the service of the most despicable
" idols, and employed unto the vilest intuitions and em-
" braces; to behold and admire *lying vanities*, to indulge
" and cherish lust and wickedness."

" There is not now a system, an entire table of *coherent*
" *truths* to be found, or a *frame of holiness*, but some shiver-
" ed parcels. How many attempts have been made, since
" that fearful fall and ruin of this fabric, to compose against
" the truths of so many several kinds into their distinct or-
" ders, and make up frames of science or useful know-
" ledge! and after so many ages, nothing is finished in any
" kind. Sometimes, truths are misplaced, and what be-
" longs to *our kind*, is transferred to another, where it will
" not fitly match; sometimes, *falshood inserted*, which shat-
" ters or disturbs the whole frame. And what with much
" fruitless pains, is done by one hand, is dashed in pieces
" by another; and it is the work of a following age to
" sweep away the fine spun cobwebs of a *former*. And
" those truths, which are of greatest use, are least regard-
" ed; their tendency and design are overlooked, or they
" are so loosened and torn off, that they cannot be wrought
" in, so as to take hold of the soul; but hover as *faint in-*
" *effectual notions*, that signify nothing. Its very funda-
" mental powers are shaken and disjointed, and their order
" towards one another confounded and broken. So what
" is judged considerable, is not considered; what is recom-
" mended as *eligible* and *lovely*, is not loved and chosen.
" Yea, the truth which is after godliness, is not so much
" *disbelieved*, *as hated*, *held in unrighteousness*: and shines
" as too feeble a light, in that malignant darkness, which
" *comprehends it not*. You come, amidst all this confusion,
" as into the ruined palace of some great Prince, in which
" you see here the fragments of a noble pillar, there the
" shattered pieces of some curious imagery, and all lying
" neglected and useless amongst heaps of dirt. He that
" invites you to take a view of the soul of man, gives you
" but such another prospect, and doth but say to you, *be-*
" *hold the desolation*, all things rude and waste. So that
" should there be any pretence to the divine presence, it

"might be said, *If GOD be here, why is it thus?* the "faded glory, the darkness, the disorder, the impurity, the "decayed state in all respects of this temple, too plainly "shew, the GREAT INHABITANT *is gone*."*

Ther. Your painter, I must own, is a master in his profession; and seems to have a peculiar talent for a *night-piece.*—But why, I beseech you, so much of his shades and solemnity? he has no colours, but the dark? no lineaments, but the four? could he not allow us one bright tint, one smiling feature? when he was copying the noblest being of this sublunary world?—Is it for the honor of the great CREATOR, to give such a deformed draught of his most finished workmanship?

Asp. It reflects no kind of dishonor upon the architect of *Babylon,* that its palaces are fallen, its edifices demolished, and its walls levelled with the ground. They might have been built with the exactest symmetry, and once embellished with every graceful ornament; notwithstanding the stroke of violence, or the sap of years, have now reduced them to heaps of rubbish.—The human soul, when recent from the inspiration of the ALMIGHTY, was bright with knowledge, amiable with virtue, and in every respect excellent. But *how*—to speak in the language of the mourning prophet; a language never more pertinent than on the present occasion—*How is the gold become dim! how is the fine gold changed!*

Ther. Man's soul is rational and eternal; is the offspring of the DEITY, and capabie of resembling its MAKER.

Asp. What *Milton* allows to the fallen archangel, I can readily allow to fallen man:

-He had not lost
All his original brightness, nor appear'd,
Less than Archangel ruin'd.

The grand and distinguishing faculties of the soul remain; so as to bespeak a child of glory ruined. When a fountain

* See Mr Howe's Treatise, intitled The living Temple.

is poisoned, the waters continue to flow: but flow no longer with *health*, flow rather with *death* in the stream. These very faculties, unless renewed and regulated by the influence of religion, must be our present misery, and will prove our everlasting curse.—"The soul," you know "is ration-"al, is eternal." And do not even the devils possess the powers of reason? Is not *their* existence also of an endless duration? yet are they, of all creatures, the most execrable and the most miserable.

You call the human soul, the offspring of the DEITY. And you call it properly. Must we not then adopt the prophet's exclamation, "*How art thou fallen, O Lucifer, son* "*of the morning* * ! How art thou degenerated, O man, "Son of the MOST HIGH! Thy glorious original serves "only to set forth, with more glaring evidence, thy de-"plorable apostacy."

Capable, you add, of resembling its MAKER. This, I acknowledge, is a valuable prerogative. In this the infernal spirits have no share. But this capacity will always lie dormant; will never awaken into act; never be established in habit; unless Almighty Grace intervene.

Ther. The most celebrated philosophers of antiquity, frequently exhort their readers to *follow nature;* as a certain guide to true excellence.—Many eloquent writers of our own country, enlarge upon the *dignity* of human nature; and from this topic derive very forcible arguments, for a correspondent dignity both of sentiment and behaviour.—Upon what can those principles of the antient sages, and of our later moralists, be founded?

Asp. Indeed, Theron, I am at a loss to tell. If they have any foundation, it is merely imaginary; not laid in truth, nor confirmed by experience.—According to my apprehension, they invert the order of things. They take that for a *postulatum*, which ought to be ranked among the *desiderata;* and make an axiom of a mere figment.

Had man continued, as he was created; to act according to nature, and according to the law of GOD, would have

* Isai. xiv. 12.

been one and the same thing. For which reason, we find no precepts of religion, delineation of morality, given to *Adam*, in paradise. Because, religion and morality were engraven on his heart: or rather, they resulted from the very bent and tendency of his perfect frame.—But since the fall, it is quite otherwise.

Ther. Have not many of the antient worthies been *living consulations* of your opinion? wise philosophers, judicious lawgivers, and steady ministers of justice? their desires refined, their affections benevolent, their whole conduct upright.

Asp. I cannot forbear wondering, that you should instance in lawgivers and ministers of justice. Since the very institution of their office *presupposes* the depravity of mankind. Was human nature agitated by no irregular or vicious inclinations, the barrier of laws could be as needless in civil societies, as the vast banks of *Holland* are needless in our upland counties.

But this, you will say, is a digressive observation. Your question requires a positive answer. And it is easy to answer, that the painting is beyond the life. If my author has been too free with the *dark*, my friend has been too lavish of the *glittering* dolours.—Those famous men might aim, perhaps, at the excellency you describe. Not one of them came up to the mark.—Or, suppose they did, this would not invalidate my tenet.

Ther. This not invalidate your tenet! then demonstration carries no conviction.

Asp. Pray, who is your greatest favourite, among all the renowned persons of antiquity?

Ther. *Socrates.*—He stands at the head of the class; and was, indisputably, the wisest and the best of the heathen world.

Asp. I think so too.—Be pleased, however, to recollect the story of the *Physiognomist*, who pretended to discover the disposition of the mind, by the cast of the countenance. The professor of this occult science undertook, you know, to exercise his skill upon *Socrates;* and prouounced him, after an examination of his features, lascivious, passionate, and morose.—This judgment, so extravagantly wide of the

truth, was bringing a storm of ridicule and resentment upon the poor fortuneteller. When the ingenuous philosopher interposed, and owned the description to be exactly true. That such was his *natural temper;* and if his conversation was of a different turn, it was owing to the aids of philosophy.—So, that, even in your most finished character, there was no innate digity, all was *adventitious*.

Ther. If corruption was derived unto all men from their forefather *Adam;* methinks, all should be equally corrupt. But this is contrary to known fact. Some we see naturally loving and lovely; gentle in their manners; and subject to no inordinate appetites.

Asp. Some persons may be of *more gentle;* or, if you please, of *less dissolute* manners, than the generality of other people. Thanks to a better temperature of their constisution, or a more watchful care in their education.—Politeness may mimick charity, or fine breeding may personate humility. One vile affection may check another, or a sense of decency may hold curb upon all.—But shew me the unregenerate man, who is subject to no inordinate appetites. When the very best unregenerate man, that ever lived, acknowledges concerning himself; *sin*, original corruption, *wrought in me all manner of concupiscence**. And even the *Stoic* philosopher cannot but confess, *Omnia in Omnibus Vitia sunt*†.

Ther. Have we not often observed heroic courage, and a generosity of spirit, where the education has been none of the strictest? To what can we ascribe these laudable qualities, but to the innate virtue and nobleness of temper, working without any auxiliary succours?

Asp. Virtue, Theron, is a *complete* assemblage, not some *disjointed* shreds, of laudable qualities. Those you mention, if not accompanied with the whole circle of amiable accomplishments, are no more to be called virtue; than two or three scattered fragments of an edifice, are to be honor-

T T

* Rom. vii. 8. † Sen. De Ben. Lib. IV

ed with the appellation of an house.—How often are those very persons, with all their fortitude, slaves to ignoble pleasures, or in bondage to the basest lusts. A more infallible indication, that they have no *uniform* generosity, nor any *real* courage.—Desire of fame, may prompt to many such acts, as *dazzle* the superficial eye: which yet are far, very far from *genuine* virtue.

Ther. Do you then attribute the *Grecian* politeness and the high *Roman* spirit, with all the gallant actions of their heroes and their Generals to a desire of fame?

Asp. There is reason to suspect, that they derived their origin from some improper motive. And no motive was more artfullly instilled, or more assiduously cherished, than the spirit of ambition.—View their crowns, their statutes, their triumphal solemnities—Read their orators, their historians, their poets—The former were the *school*, the latter were the *masters*, to inculcate this grand lesson.

Let us consider the *Romans* a little more attentively; and not amongst the dregs of their community, but in their very best ages; when their Republic subsisted, and their *Scipios* flourished. Many great and shining deeds were undoubtedly performed. But did they spring from a *reverential regard* to the supreme BEING; from obedience to his will or zeal for his honor?

If this principle should be thought too refined, did they proceed from a *love* to their *fellow-creatures?* in case, neither of these motives * actuated their conduct, it can never be placed to the account of virtue.—Had benevolence been their leading principle, why such *inhumanity* to *Carthage?* why must that opulent city be laid in ashes, and her numerous citizens be put to the sword? were they enemies to mankind, or a nuisance in the world? you well know, that they were only too industrious, and too powerful. By

* A zeal for the honor of GOD, and a concern for the good of our fellow-creatur are the true sources of virtue. When our actions flow not from these principles, rea will put a *query* upon them, and revelation will *expunge* them from the list of virtues They may be specio s in themselves; they may be costly to the performer; they n even be serviceable to others. But can no more deserve the title of *virtue*, than the activ of our sun-fire offices, in extinguishing the flames on some insured house, can merit name of *charity*.

which means, they would be in a condition, to eclipse the magnificence of the *Roman* name, and dispute the prize of sovereignty with the *Roman* state. For this crime—a crime in ambition's eye, absolutely inexcusable—even *Cato's* upright soul, shall doom them to utter destruction; and *Scipio's* gentle hand, shall execute the horrid decree.

Is *this* virtue? does virtue ravage countries, from the mere wantonness of pride, or lust of pre-eminence? does virtue destroy millions of lives, only to aggrandize a particular people, or extend the dominion of some favourite empire? If *this* were virtue, *Brutus* thought too honorably of her character when he termed her an *empty name.*—I am sure, my Theron has juster notions of things. He need not be informed, that true virtue, far from personating the rapacious harpy, acts as a father to others, as a father to all. And, like HIM, who is both its pattern and its author, *goes about doing good.*

Ther. The most elegant cane, if plunged into yonder bason, while the waters are curled by the breeze, will appear both crooked and coarse. I cannot but think, the accusers of human nature examine her state with a *prejudicial* understanding. Which has the same perverse effect upon their judgment, as those ruffled waves have upon the sight.—Or else, they contemplate her condition with a *melancholy* mind; which, like a jaundiced eye, gives every object a distempered aspect; darkens the chearful; discolors the beautiful; and hangs even the sun in mourning.

Asp. Rather let this be the comparison, to illustrate our point.—View the meanest piece of earth, through the *prismatic* glass; and it will appear, not beautiful only, but perfectly splendid. Remove the delusory medium, and all the sophisticated finery vanishes. The indigo, the orange, the violet are gone: and leave nothing to be seen, but a rude unornamented lump of clay.—So, if we consider human nature, according to the *partial* representations of self-love; or contemplate it, in the *flattering* mirror of some popular writings; it may seem regular, holy, excellent. But, if we behold it under the light, the unerring light of revelation, its fansied charms disappear; it stands clothed with deformity; and is a spectacle of commiseration, if not of horror.

Ther. What reason have you to father such a notion upon the sacred writings?—The sacred writings inform us, that man was made *after the image of GOD*. This, sure, could not be so dishonorable and depraved a pattern, as your discourse would insinuate.

Asp. Far, very far from a dishonorable pattern! the image of GOD is the *consummate standard* of all perfection.– In conformity to this admirable exemplar, our first parents were created; and in this admirable condition they continued, till by transgression they *fell*. Fell from the most holy and happy state, into guilt, condemnation, and ruin.—Therefore, when this fatal catastrophe had taken place, the sacred historian varies his stile; and with a remarkable peculiarity, as well as propriety of speech, says, *Adam begat a son in his own* *, not in the DIVINE, *likeness*. That every reader may advert to this melancholy, but important truth: it is marked more strongly still; it is enforced by a very emphatical repetition. *After his own image* now fallen and corrupted; and therefore contradistinguished to the image of GOD, mentioned in a preceding verse. Which expressions are evidently intended, to denote the difference between the state, in which *Adam* was created, and *Seth* was begotten.

Ther. Pray let me have a succinct, but full account of this tragical story. Since all your orthodox Divines lay such a mighty stress upon the doctrine of the *fall*.

Asp. GOD, having formed the human body out of the ground, animated the structure with a living soul; and transcribed upon this soul the image of his blessed SELF. All was light in the understanding; all was rectitude in the will; and nothing but harmony in the affections.--Man, thus endowed, was placed in the delightful garden of *Eden*; and furnished with every accommodation, which was necessary to support his being, or desirable to gratify his senses.—He was constituted Lord of this lower creation, and amidst numberless indulgences, received only *one—easy—*

* This is affirmed, not of Cain, but of Seth, the most excellent of Adam's children, and father of the holy seed.

negative—command—*not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.*—From this he was to abstain, as a pledge of his subjection, and as an exercise of his obedience. Bliss and immortality were to be the reward of duty; misery and death the punishment of disobedience. *In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die* *, was the sanction of the divine law.

How equitable! how gracious the terms! yet, neither the goodness of GOD, could induce him to keep them; nor the authority of GOD, deter him from breaking them. —Unreasonably discontented even with such advantageous circumstances, and presumptuously aspiring to be like the MOST HIGH, he hearkened to the suggestions of the evil spirit.—In a word; he violated the precept, and incurred the penalty. GOD was just, and man was undone. He lost his uprightness †; became subject to mortality; and, as the nervous original expresses it, *died the death.*

Ther. True; he became subject to many bodily infirmities, and to the necessity of final dissolution.—But, what has this sentence, or what have these sufferings to do with *your* notion of universal depravity in the mind? the death, which the Almighty LEGISLATOR threatened, can be opposed only to the life, which the Almighty CREATOR gave.

Asp. Be it so.—The CREATOR gave, and man possessed a life, incomparably more excellent, than that which the pulse imparts, or the beasts enjoy. He possessed a *divine life.* Which, according to the definition of the Apostle, consisted in *knowledge, in righteousness, and true holiness.*‡ This—which was the distinguishing glory, and the supreme felicity of his nature—this, alas! was extinct.

* Gen. ii. 17.

† ——————Innocence, that as a veil
Had shadow'd them from knowing ill, was gone,
Just confidence, and native righteousness.
MILT. Book IX. 1054.

‡ Eph. iv. 24. Col. iii. 10. This is what Moses calls the image of GOD.

His understanding, originally enlightened with wisdom, was clouded and overwhelmed with ignorance.—His heart, once filled with religious veneration, and warmed with heavenly love, became alienated from GOD, his MAKER.—His passions and appetites, rational and regular before, shook off the government of order and reason. The whole moral frame was unhinged, disjointed, broken; or, in other words, *the life of GOD* was departed from the soul.

Ther. What cause have you to suppose, that all this misery was either included in the threatening, or introduced by the fall?

Asp. The ignorance of fallen Adâm was palpable. Witness that absurd attempt, to hide himself from the eye of OMNISCIENCE, among the trees of the garden.—His aversion to the all-gracious GOD was equally plain.—Otherwise, he would never have fled from his MAKER; but rather have hasted, and on the wings of desire, into the place of the divine manifestation.

A strange variety of *disorderly passions*,* were evidently predominant in his breast—*pride;* for he refuses to acknowledge his guilt, though he cannot but own the fact—*ingratitude;* for he obliquely upbraids the CREATOR with his gift, as though it had been a snare, rather than a blessing; *the woman, whom* thou *gavest me*—*want of natural affection;* for he endeavours to cast all the blame upon the weaker vessel; and to acquit his obnoxious self, by impeaching the wife of his bosom.—The female criminal acts the same unhumbled part. She neither takes shame to herself; nor gives glory to GOD; nor puts up a single petition for pardon.

* MILTON, speaking of the unhappy pair, and describing the consequences of their fall, says:

————— ——Nor only tears
Rain'd at their eyes; but high winds within
Began to rise; high passions, anger, hate,
Mistrust, suspicion, discord, and shook sore
Their inward state of mind; calm region once,
And full of peace; now tost and turbulent!
For, understanding rul'd not, and the will
Heard not her lore! but, in subjection now
To sensual appetite, who from beneath
Usurping, over sovereign reason claim'd
Superior sway.——BOOK IX. 1121.

As all these disasters ensued, upon the breach of the commandment; they furnish us, I think, with the best *key* to open the meaning of the prohibitory sanction. They prove, beyond any argument, that spiritual death, and all its consequences, were comprehended in the extent of the threatening.

Ther. How could *one* act of disobedience produce such destructive effects? erase the fair image of the GODHEAD; and stamp the monster, stamp the very devil, in its stead?—And so *small* an act of disobedience too!

Asp. The prohibition, if you please, was small; not so the transgression. It was committed against the clearest knowledge of duty, and the strongest obligations to obedience. It argued ingratitude for the richest favors, and unbelief of the most solemn declarations. It was an act of the most horrid presumption in the creature, and of the most impious rebellion against the CREATOR.

As to the smallness, or rather the gentle and benign import of the command, this aggravates, beyond measure, the crime of disobedience. Alluding to the words, once addressed to the *Syrian* general, we may justly expostulate—
" O thou Adam, if thy LORD had bid thee to do some
" great thing;* in submission to his high authority, and
" out of gratitude for his unspeakable goodness, oughtest
" thou not to have done it? How much more, when he
" says to thee?—Freely eat of all, except this single tree.
" Thousands, thousands of honors, privileges, and gifts be
" thine; only one acknowledgment of thy subjection,
" mine. And that the easiest, which thy heart can wish,
" or even thy fancy conceive."

You ask, *how* could one act of disobedience produce such destructive effects? I answer; the *reality* of the fact, in numberless instances of material nature, is plain to a demonstration; while the *manner* of operation, remains an impenetrable secret. Every child perceives the former; *Newton* himself is a loss for the latter. For which reason, I have always thought it better, to believe what GOD has

* Kings v. 13

taught, than attempt to explain, what GOD has concealed. Let us forego this curious, perhaps fruitless enquiry; and substitute a remark, which naturally arises from the subject, and may considerably edify our minds.

Ther. Edify! Is it possible to render this dishonorable and afflictive notion *edifying?* Can any generous fruit spring from such a penurious soil?

Asp. Sampson, I believe, had no expectation of finding any thing valuable, in the reliques of his slain lion. But, to his agreeable disappointment, *there was honey in the carcase* *. If our doctrine appear ghastly as the one, it may yield a benefit sweet as the other.

From hence we may learn (what, when rightly learnt, is more serviceable than all the sciences) the *extreme malignity* of sin.—When *volcanos* open their tremendous jaws, and disgorge a fiery inundation; they confine their fury to a single territory.—When *famine* lifts her mildewed hand, and destroys the supports of animal life; she is content with ruining a kingdom or a nation—When *war* drenches his sword in blood, or the *pestilence* impregnates the air with poison; they also, even they observe some limits, and never make the whole compass of nature the scene of their ravages.—But *sin* leveled its blow at the whole human race. SIN, poured contagion, and spread destruction, through all countries, and all ages. One *single* act of sin brought confusion and a curse upon the material, and miseries, infinite millions of miseries, on the rational world.—How then should we fear this moss horrible and pernicious of all evils! With what carefulness guard against its insidious allurements! with what resolution fly from its killing caresses!

Ther. I must observe Aspasio, that you take for granted what remains to be proved. For, supposing your account true, with regard to Adam; yet, how does this affect his children? why must all his posterity be contaminatod, because their forefather has played the prodigal? Such a heavy charge against the whole body of mankind will not be admitted, without very cogent proofs.

* Judg. xiv. 8.

Asp. The proofs are cogent; perhaps irrefragable. Poetry, addressing fallen *Adam*, is very clear in her deposition.

——————They, who never touch'd
Th'excepted tree, nor with the snake conspir'd,
Nor sinn'd thy sin, yet from that sin derive
Corruption *.

Reason offers to turn evidence in the case. Reason, in concurrence with revelation, demands; *Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean* †? If the fountain be polluted, how can the streams be pure? and if the root is corrupt, 'tis impossible to conceive, how the branches should be sound, or the fruit good ‡.

The scriptural testimonies are almost innumerable. They pour their evidence from every quarter; and constitute, not two or three only, but a whole cloud of witnesses.—*GOD made man upright*, says the royal preacher. The human nature in its primitive state, was all regularity, and without any improper bias. *But*, ever since the first transgression, men have been inclined to evil. And in consequence of this depravity, *they have sought out many inventions* §--Don't you observe the very peculiar, and no less significant, structure of the language? *God made*, not he *makes*. *Man*, at his first creation; not *men*, in their successive generations. Then *he* was wise and holy; now *they* are foolish and depraved. Our nature, as proceeding

* MILTON. † Job. xiv. 4.

‡ Milton has anticipated Theron's objection; and, in Adam's soliloquy, very judiciously solved it.

——————————Ah! why should all mankind
For one man's fault, thus guiltless be condemn'd,
If guiltless? But from me what can proceed
But all corrupt, both body and mind deprav'd,
Not to do only, but to will the same
With me! how can they acquitted stand
In sight of GOD? Book X. 822.

§ Eccles. vii. 29.

from a gracious CREATOR, was without fault and without defect; but as propagated from a fallen parent, is unhappily altered. *Fuimus Troes.*

Ther. I don't deny, but multitudes of people, seduced by bad *example*, or betrayed by their own *inadvertency*, have departed from the rule of duty, have, as the wise man affirms, tried many foolish experiments to acquire happiness, and devised as many idle excuses for their folly. But, this is no irrefragable proof, that their very nature was depraved It only implies, that, not taking proper heed to their ways, they warped from their native uprightness. As yonder *tulips*, though perfectly beautiful at present, if not attended with the necessary cultivation, will degenerate into homely flowers; and, at length, be no better than tawdry weeds.

Asp. No, my friend. Iniquity is not an adventitious thing, catched from example, or contracted by carelessness. These may increase, but these do not occasion, the *moral malady*. A sinful disposition is early as our being: is the very mould, in which all our faculties are cast.—*David* bears very express testimony to this humbling truth. *Behold!* he sets his *N. B.* upon the passage. 'Tis a sad, but certain fact. Such as should never depart from my memory, nor ever be omitted in my confessions. *I was shapen in wickedness, and in sin did my mother conceive me.*† As though he had said—"Alas! LORD, this crime, "though extremely horrid, is but a little part of my guilt. "I have not only sinned in practice, but I am totally and "universally corrupt in my very nature."

This he acknowledges, not to extenuate his offence, but to lay open his excessive vileness. And indeed it is not possible, to form a right judgment of ourselves, or to be duly humbled before GOD, unless we add the depravation of our nature to the transgressions of our life. Just as it is impossible to discern, what monstrous and voracious animals lie hid in the ocean, if we only glance an eye upon the surface of the waters.

† Psal. li. 5.

Ther. This, you know, was written by the royal penitent, under the pangs of a severe remorse. Does not a sense of his enormous iniquity, together with the apprehension of divine wrath, cause his hand to shake, and lead him to aggravate features?—Or, suppose it were true of the adulterous king, it is equally applicable to others, who have escaped such gross pollutions?

Asp. It is no exaggerating draught, but a faithful delineation: and exactly represents every child of *Adam.*—It was written with the utmost deliberation; and therefore, is introduced with that call for peculiar attention, *Behold!* —And though *David* was scandalously criminal in his intrigue with the wife of *Uriah;* yet, the *general* tenour of his life was not only irreproachable, but exemplary. Who so zealous for the House of GOD, or so devoted an admirer of the divine word? his heart was an altar, ever flaming with heavenly love; and his tongue a trumpet, to sound the praises of JEHOVAH through all generations.—And, if he had reason to make this abasing confession; who is the person, that can think himself aggrieved, by sharing in the imputation?

One of our most eminent martyrs *, when he heard of any malefactor, condemned to suffer an ignominious death, used to lay his hand upon his breast, and say—"the seeds "of all those villanies, which brought that unhappy wretch "to the gibbet, were sown *here.* If they have not sprung "up into the same detestable deeds, unto divine grace "*alone,* be all the glory!"

Ther. Your martyrs had honest hearts, but not always the clearest heads. I admire their zeal, and reverence their memories. But I can no more receive their opinion as an oracle, that I can be persuaded to worship their relics.

Asp. I have no intention to palm popery on my friend, nor any desire to calumniate the human species. If it be disingenuous and sinful, to asperse a particular character; how much more unjustifiable, to traduce our nature in general.

* Mr. Bradford.

My account, dark and disgustful as it is, stands confirmed by a higher authority, than any private opinion. It is confirmed from an universal survey of mankind; taken by the eye of the CREATOR himself, and left upon record in the books of revelation. *The LORD looketh down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek after GOD.*—What is the result of this grand enquiry? It must, without all peradventure, be infallibly true. Because GOD's inspection is too keen, to be eluded; and his judgement too impartial, to be biassed. This is the report, made by the infinitely wise OBSERVER: *They are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy* *; *there is none that doeth good, no not one.*

Ther. This, I apprehend, is the character of those besotted creatures, those most egregious of all fools, *Who say there is no GOD.* To them the *Psalm* relates, and to them the abandoned character is appropriated. They have it, if I may so speak, *Cum Privilegio.*

Asp. It is meant rather of practical, than of speculative Atheists; who say, if not explicitly with their mouths, yet implicitly in their hearts, there is no GOD. Who live, as if there was no ALL-SEEING EYE, to take cognizance of their present conduct; no Supreme JUDGE, to call them to a future reckoning.—Now I dare appeal to yourself, though perhaps the fondest of fathers, whether this instance of *foolishness, is not bound up in the hearts of our children* †. Nay, I dare appeal to any unprejudiced person: Whether it be not natural to us all, both in youth and manhood, to forget our CREATOR?

In this case, Theron, there is no monopoly. Your right and mine, are too strongly established by experience, and too clearly expressed in the preceding Scripture, to admit of any controversy.—If there were *any*, that understood——They are *all* gone out of the way—there is *none*, that doeth good—No, not *one.*—Could any conveyancer in *Europe* have contrived a form of words, more fully to ascertain our unhappy title?

* Psal. xiv. 2, 3. † Prov. xxii. 15.

Ther. There may be some texts in Scripture, which seem to countenance your assertion. But these refer to the worst of men, in the worst of times. And can you, with any justice, ascribe the properties of a few reprobates to the whole species?

Asp. This very passage, and others of a like import, are adopted by St. *Paul*, and applied both to *Jews* and *Gentiles*; with this professed design, *that* every *mouth may be stopped, and all the world may be found guilty* before GOD.* Which evinces, I should think, beyond all doubt, the *universality* of its extent.

If to the universality, we add the *antiquity* of this fact it will bear the two grand characteristics of truth. Far from being a novel opinion, it was received as a maxim, in the early age of *Job*. *What is man, that he should* pretend to *be clean? And he that is born of a woman, that he should* presume to be *righteous?* Righteous before the infinitely JUST and HOLY ONE! *Behold! He putteth no trust in his aints*, though the most exalted of all intelligent beings. *Yea, the heavens*, those brightest parts of the material creation, *are not clean in his sight. How much more abominable and filthy is man*†*? Who drinketh iniquity;* though lothesome to GOD, and worse than poison to his own soul; yet drinketh it *like water;* without any hesitation or the least fear, with an eager and profuse delight.

This, you will observe, was alledged in a dispute, carried on with no small vehemency. Yet is admitted, on all hands, as unexceptionably true.—Be pleased also to take notice, that the charge is not confined to some very notorious sinners, but is laid against the whole body of mankind. Whatever figure they may make, each in his own conceit; they are all described in the word of GOD—as *Beings*, insatiably athirst after evil—from *objects*, which we cannot endure to behold; or cannot behold without abhorrence. —*Such* is man by nature! People must have eyes very different from mine, to discern any *dignity* in this draught.

* Rom. iii. 19. † Job xv. 14, 15, 16.

Ther. As to innate dignity, we will let it pass. But this I must insist upon, and several writers of the first repute are on my side—That we enter the stage of life, in a state of *indifference* either to good or evil—That the affections are like a balance, nicely poised, and preponderating neither one way nor the other.—The whole soul, like a sheet of fair paper, is equally susceptible of strait or crooked lines; and will as readily receive the amiable features of an angel, as the hideous deformity of a devil.

Asp. With regard to your first illustration.—The simile, I think, confutes the sentiment. For, to be in *suspence*, whether we shall love the LORD our GOD, the giver of all good, and the source of all perfection; this surely, must be condemned as an irreligious temper.—This is a criminal halting between GOD and *Baal.*—A neutrality, which is no better than hostility.

I fear, the writers you mention, pay but little deference to the inspired volume. Our escutcheon is very differently blazoned, in that office of spiritual heraldry. *A transgressor from the womb* †, is one of our hereditary titles. Transgressors we are, by strong internal propensity; even before we transgress, in outward act.

Observe the young hawthorn plants, which have unfolded their green leaves, in yonder nursery; but have scarce learnt to spread the gay blossom. Is there in those plants an equal aptitude, to produce the luscious juicy grape, or their own coarse and husky berry? By no means. They will, (unless grafted with some generous Cyon) certainly, universally, constantly bear the same harsh fruit, with their parent tree.—So certainly will the human mind, if not renewed by the SPIRIT of CHRIST, branch out into ungodly tempers, and bring forth wicked practices.

Ther. The nobleman, mentioned by *Xenophon* ‡, when overcome by an alluring temptation, devised for his excuse the notion of two souls; one, that inclined him to vice; another that prompted him to virtue. This was a moderate caricatura, compared with my friend's. He will allow

† Isai. xlviii. 8. ‡ Cyropæd. Lib. VI.

nothing regular or graceful in the human heart.—You have metamorphosed the master-piece of the creation, into such a deformed object; as may justly render him a terror to himself. Can there be a grosser libel upon the CREATOR, or a greater discouragement to our fellow-creatures?

Asp. If this be a deformed piece, what will you call the following description? "GOD saw that the wickedness "of man was great upon the earth; and that every imagi- "nation of the thoughts of his heart, was only evil conti- "nually *." This, perhaps may be reckoned a more monstrous drawing still. Yet it came from that hand, which painted the canopy of the skies, and touched all the pictures of nature into such inimitable perfection.

Pray, let us examine the most distinguishing features in this draught.—Not barely the works of his hand, or the words of his tongue, but the imaginations of his heart, are evil. The contagion has spread itself through the inner man. It has tainted the seat of his principles, and the source of his actions.—Is there not, will you say, some mixture of good? No; they are *only* evil. There is no hopeful tendency. Not so much as a little leaven of piety; that may have a chance to diffuse itself, and meliorate the whole lump. But are there no lucid intervals? No happy moments, when virtue gains the ascendency? None: he is only evil continually. The usurpation of sin is total, and its tyranny perpetual.

What I have advanced, therefore, is no libel upon the CREATOR's benignity. Because, it is the very echo of his own determination. Neither is it so properly discouraging, as humbling and alarming to our fellow-creatures. —*Humbling*, to make us sensible of our ruin? *Alarming*, to make us desirous of a recovery.

Ther. Is not the description, which you have produced, peculiar to the men of that wicked generation? Whose guilt was unparalled, as their punishment?

Asp. It is applicable both to them and their successors. The wisdom of GOD repeats the charge, and fixes it upon

* Gen vi. 5.

the race, which survived the flood *. The depravity of human nature continued, nor could the waters of an universal deluge purge it away. So deep alas! is the stain, and so incorrigible the virulency, of original corruption! that it will yield to nothing—to nothing it will yield, but to the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the HOLY GHOST †. Till this takes place, every heart of man must wear the Prophet's stigmatizing motto, "Deceitful above "all things, and desperately wicked."

Ther. This passage, I am informed, is not rightly translated; especially in the last expression. The *Hebrew* original does not bear so hard upon the human character as the *English* version.

Asp. You allow then, that the heart is deceitful. And of this we have a glaring proof, in the conduct of *Hazael*. He thought it impossible, that he should ever perpetrate such horrid barbarities, as the Prophet foresaw. "Is thy "servant a dog, that he should do this great thing ‡?" Yes, *Hazael*; however thou mayst imagine thyself gentle as a lamb, thou art fierce as a dog, and savage as a tyger. —Which was most terribly demonstrated by the event.

Suppose, we translate the other word somewhat more acurately. The little alteration will be of less service to your cause. Instead of desperately wicked, you may, if you please, read *deplorably disordered* §. This is the exact import of the phrase.—It is a metaphor, derived from a very distempered body. In which, the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the crown of whose head, to the sole of whose feet, there is nothing but consuming disease, and enfeebling languors ¶. The rules of civility, 'tis true, may set a specious varnish on the conversation. But until grace, sanctifying grace administers the remedy, the most civilized heart will be only like the pale emaciated cheek, that is poorly enlivened with paint.

Ther. What say the writers of the New Testament? Is no their way of thinking more liberal and benign?—If

* Gen. viii. 21. † Tit. iii. 5. ‡ 2 Kings viii. 13.

§ Jer. xvii. 9. ¶ Isai. i. 6.

human nature wore so *hideous* an aspect, under the legal dispensation; since the coming of our LORD, and the publishing of his gospel, one may expect an improved and more pleasing face of things.

Asp. Human nature in *every* period of time, and under every dispensation of religion, is still the *same.* It was the SPIRIT of CHRIST, who indited the Old Testament, and he cannot vary from himself, in the declarations of the new.

I am very much inclined to believe, that all the *bodily* diseases, which our divine PHYSICIAN healed, during his abode on earth, where so many emblematical representations of *spiritual* disorders. Which, like certain family distempers, may be said to run in the blood of all mankind. Will you give me leave, Theron, to explain myself? I don't like to engross the discourse. Yet I would willingly enlarge upon this subject.

Ther. By all means. The laws of argument, seperate from the indulgencies of friendship, give you a warrant to urge, whatever may support your cause.—Besides, I shall be glad to hear your sentiments upon a point so curious.

Asp. The poor *Leper*, covered with noisome sores, is the very picture of a *pollutsd sinner.* Was the one, for his contagious impurities, seperated from the society of his fellow-citizens? So shall the other, for his abominable uncleanness, be banished from the beatific presence; unless he be cleansed by the blood, and justified by the righteousness of JESUS.

You pity the condition of that unhappy creature, who was born *blind.* His eyes rolled, but rolled in vain, to find the dawning ray. Such is the benighted state of the human mind, till Almighty GOODNESS command the scales of ignorance to fall off, and pour heavenly day through all the intellectual faculties. Then, and not till then, we begin to know the holiness, the justice, the adorable excellencies of GOD.—We see the sublime purity of his law, and the extreme depravity of our own hearts.—We are brought acquainted with the transcendent glories of our REDEEMER's person, and apprehend that most comfortable myste-

ry of his substitution in our stead. We discern the ineffable perfection of his merits, and the divinely rich freeness of his grace *. Truths, incomparably more delightful to the soul, than all the delectable scenes of creation are to the sight.

The paralytics *enervated* limbs too truly represent the impotence of our nature. Was he unable to grind at a mill; to run in a race; or to turn himself on his bed? So unable are we, to fight the good fight of faith; to exercise the graces of christianity; or even to turn ourselves unto GOD.--Do not *you*, my friend, experience something of this inability? For *my* part, I must lay my hand upon my breast, and daily, hourly confess, " *The palsy is here*. Though
" not altogether dead in sin (blessed be CHRIST JESUS,
" and his quickening SPIRIT!) yet how languid is my
" zeal, how enfeebled my industry, in the great affair of
" everlasting salvation!—I fain would believe, and with a
" full assurance of faith, the promises of the unchangeable
" JEHOVAH. But how often do I stagger through un-
" belief!—I would fain love, and with the warmest grati-
" tude, my ever-merciful and most beneficent GOD. But
" Oh! what coldness benumbs my affections!—I wish to
" be humble in every thought; heavenly in all my desires;
" and wholly resigned to the divine will. But, alas! my
" sufficiency for these things, is like the flaccid sinew, or
" the withered arm."

It would be endless to particularize all the maladies, which were emblems of our misery, and the triumphs of our LORD's power. Let me only remark—That their bodies were afflicted with a single disorder; our souls labour under a complication of evils.—They felt their affliction, and were desirous, importunately desirous, of relief. We are, still awakened from above, insensible of our cursed state and our lost condition. We add, alas! we add, to all

* This and the preceding particulars, are lessons of the last importance in the Christian book. The knowledge of them deserves to be most solicitously sought, both by atten- [illegible] and [illegible] earnest prayer. For, to know them is to be truly wise, to

our other indispositions, a stupifying lethargy, or an extravagant delirium.

Ther. Such allegorical expositions of Scripture are pretty enough. But, I presume, you yourself cannot reckon them *demonstrative.* For my own part, I must appeal from the surmises of fancy, to the verdict of reason.

Asp. I cannot think that the allegorical sense, when soberly introduced, is unworthy our regard, or without its weight. However, I have no design to preclude your appeal.—Will the avowed, will the reiterated decision of an Apostle, satisfy my friend, and be admitted as the verdict of reason? St. Paul has declared of himself; *in me, that is in my flesh,* or unrenewed nature, *dwelleth no good* * ; no good temper, nor so much as any good desire. Elsewhere he affirms; that the carnal mind, or unregenerate soul, is *not subject to the law of GOD.* Nay, is an enemy, or rather *enmity* itself †—against what?—Against sin? That were a noble antipathy..—Against the world? That were a laudable disaffection.—No; but against GOD and his law. Amazing perverseness! To be enmity against GOD; who is boundless benignity, and consummate goodness. Enmity against his law; which is the transcript of his amiable perfections, and the faultless model of all virtue.

Ther. This, I suppose, is the character of *Saul* the *Pharisee,* not of *Paul* the Apostle. Descriptive of his condition, when he was "a blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious."

Asp. It relates not to himself alone, but is applicable to all, who continue in a state of nature.—The blessed AUTHOR of our being, speaking of mankind in general, says; that *he is even flesh* ‡: mere flesh, altogether flesh, his very soul, and all its powers, are wholly enslaved to fleshly appetites.—The beneficent RESTORER of our happiness, pronounces the same sentence, in the very same words: *That which is born of the flesh is flesh* ‖: the faculties, which men receive by their natural birth, have a vitiated taste,

* Rom. vii. 18. † Rom. viii. 7. ‡ Gen. vi. 3.

‖ John iii. 6.

and a carnal bias. They relish not the refined, the heavenly, the godlike. They incline only to selfish aims, and groveling pursuits.—Our SAVIOUR reinculcates the admonition, and illustrates it by a very remarkable allusion. You cannot forget his answer to a procrastinating disciple; *let the dead bury their dead* *: Intimating, that as many as are unsanctified by the HOLY GHOST, though possessed of an animal, are destitute of the divine life. Are no more able to perform any spiritual and holy duty, than a pale corpse in the coffin, or dry bones in the Charnel-honse, are qualified to transact any secular business.

St. *Paul* sets the seal of heaven to this momentous truth, in various passages of his epistles. From a multitude let me select one, and recommend it to your serious consideration. *You, that were sometime alienated and enemies*: the *Colossians*, and all mankind, were alienated from the living GOD; had no true knowledge of him; and, what is worse, had no sincere desire after him. Nay; they were not only strangers but enemies; in a state of hostility to his holy nature and heavenly will.—What can express a greater degeneracy? Nothing, unless it be the following clause: *by a mind intent upon wicked works* †. A mind, not only averse from all good, but passionately prone to all evil,

Ther. A few picked passages, of a figurative import, and artfully cogged by some dexterous interpretation, may seem to support your cause.

Asp. Ah! Theron, there is no need to use sleight of of hand. He that runs may read this docrine in the sacred authors. It is interwoven with the whole series of their *historical*, and makes a professed part of their *practical* writings.

What is more common with the inspired penmen, than to express a profligate course of life, *by following our own imaginations, and walking in our own ways?* When immortality and licentiousness were predominant in *Israel*; knew no restraints, and kept no bounds; how does the unerring

* Matt. viii. 22. † Coloss. i. 21.

historian describe this horrible state of things? *Every one did that which was right in his own eyes* *. Nothing can more strongly imply the extreme depravity of mankind, than such a phraseology. Which makes it one and the same thing, to pursue our natural inclinations, and to act the abandoned sinner.

St. *Jude* cannot write a few lines, but he must touch upon this subject; must teach this humbling lesson. *Sensual* †, he says, *not having the SPIRIT.* According to *his* estimate, not to be actuated by the power of grace, is to remain under the dominion of sensuality. If we may credit this ambassador of CHRIST, *every* man, while unrenewed by the Divine SPIRIT, is governed by flesh and sense. Can *any* man then pretend to be originally free from the ignoble influence of corruption.

St. *Paul* exempts not himself, no, nor any of the highest saints, from the opprobrious charge: *We all walked according to the desires of the flesh and of the mind.* Which desires in *us*, as well as in the idolatrous *Heathens*, were base, sordid, and contaminating. Insomuch that we, who are *Jews* by birth; who are the sons of GOD, by our new birth; even we were, *by nature, the children of wrath* ‡; Creatures, in whom GOD could take no pleasure, and against whom his wrath was revealed from heaven. If so, then doubtless, subject to depravity, and chargeable with sin.

Ther. What says St. *James?* You have suppressed, and I had almost forgot, his testimony; though it is so very pertinent to my purpose, and so very explicit in my favor. *Men, who are made after the similitude of GOD.*—The similitude of GOD signifies, in the sacred books, those moral endowments, which distinguish the possessor both from the brute and the devil. And if men are made after this image; if they are created with these endowments; where is your doctrine of original sin?

Asp. I began to flatter myself, that your objections were exhausted. But since I am mistaken in this particular,

* Judg. xvii. 6. † Jude 19. ‡ Eph. ii. 3.

surely it must be as great a mistake to imagine, that our Apostle would maintain an opinion, so repugnant to the aforementioned texts, and so contrary to universal observation.—Do not you perceive the very reverse true, with regard to your own *children?* Why do you address them with such tender entreaties; with such warm exhortations; such repeated arguments? Why do you allure them to duty by promises, and deter them from transgression by threatenings? Is all this regimen, all this discipline, necessary for creatures, that bear the holy image of GOD?

They *made after the similitude of GOD!*—Then they have no need of the *renewing* influences of the HOLY GHOST, in case they live; and no need of the atonement of CHRIST's blood, in case they die. Would *James*, the LORD's brother, assert such an egregious error, as not only opposes a single article, but undermines the *whole* constitution of christianity? Sets aside the sanctification of the Divine SPIRIT, and the propitiation of the REDEEMER's death?—Impossible for him to assert! Impossible, I should think, for us to suppose!

St. *James* speaks of a fact that is past: speaks of men *collectively*, as they were all included in their first parent. The passage, I apprehend, should be translated, not, men that *are;* but, men that *were* * created: whose human nature was formed.—The Scripture considers *Adam*, as the common parent of us all: nay more, considers us all as existing in our great progenitor. Which is so far from overthrowing, that it establishes, the point in debate. For, if we were all created after the similitude of GOD, in and with Adam; it must follow, that we all fell from our conformity to GOD, in and with Adam.—If so—let me once retort my friend's interrogatory—Where, or in whom, is *not* original sin?

I am very sure, this doctrine runs through our *liturgy;* is an essential part of our *articles;* and most strongly delineated in our homilies. Shall I produce some of those testimonies; which are as clear, as they are copious?

* Jam iii 9.

Ther. No more of your testimonies, good Aspasio. Inform me rather, what *advantage* can accrue from your inculcating, or my adopting such a doctrine. Suppose, it were undeniably true; disagreeable truths, like disagreeable objects, should be consigned over to security, nor obtruded upon our view.—On such an occasion, the reply of *Themistocles* should be mine. One of the *Literati* of *Greece*, offered to communicate an elaborate and curious invention. By means of which, his memory should be so wonderfully strengthened, as to retain whatever he read or heard. "My friend, replied the hero, you quite mistake "the way to serve me. I want to learn the art, not of re- "membering, but of forgetting."

Asp. If to forget our disease, were a likely method to *restore* our health, I should readily concur in your hero's way of thinking. As this will hardly be allowed, I cannot but judge it more adviseable, to give some attention to our disease, that we may enquire after a remedy.

Ther. Where is this remedy to be had?

Asp. Not on earth, but from heaven—The schools of science cannot discover it. The courts of kings are unable to procure it. The college of physicians know not how to prescribe it. But the gospel of our salvation prescribes, prepares, and dispenses it. The language of CHRIST in his holy word is, *I will bring her health and cure* *. And the beginning of our cure is, to be sensible of our disorder.

Hence we are taught to be *humble*.—To review the catalogue of our actual transgressions, is a mortifying employ. But that which lays the soul in the lowest abasement, is the conviction of *inbred* iniquity. This strikes at the root of human vanity, and cuts asunder the very sinews of self-conceit. A total loss of righteousness and true holiness; an utter impotency to all good, and an impetuous propensity to all evil; these are not visitants, but inhabitants, congenial with our frame, and ingrained in our constitution. How then—O! how can we be vain of our moral beauty, who have such an hereditary defilement and defor-

* Jer xxxiii. 6.

nity cleaving to our faculties? Surely, this must banish the *Pharisee* from our breast, and inspire us with the sentiments of that sincere penitent, *Behold! I am vile* *! Must teach us the language of the abashed leper, *unclean! unclean* †!

Ther. I should think, it would make us melancholy, rather than humble. Serve no other purpose, than to introduce an afflictive sense of extreme wretchedness.

Asp. Did we intend to rest here, your apprehensions would be just. But we urge the doctrine of original corruption, as a *preparative* for the redemption of CHRIST.

It is observable, that very few applied to the blessed JESUS in the days of his flesh, but the sons and daughters of affliction. The levee of that PRINCE of peace, was crouded by the lame, the blind, the diseased. These, being sensible of distress, and longing for relief, fell as humble supplicants at his feet. While others, who were firm in their health, and gay in their spirits, rejected him with contemptuous scorn.—When we perceive "the plague of our "heart," and feel those worse than ulcerous sores, which overspread our nature; we also shall ardently seek to *the* LORD *our hearer*. When we find ourselves subject to the curse of the law, in bondage to the tyranny of Satan, and liable to everlasting damnation; *then* the Divine Physician and the Divine REDEEMER will be precious indeed.—Whereas, if we remain insensible of our misery, the gospel, which is *saving health* to the contrite soul, will be an unaffecting story to our ears. We may hear it, we may read it, as an amusing narrative; but shall not *receive* it as a sovereign remedy.

Ther. Not receive the gospel, Aspasio! I hardly understand what you mean. I often study the gospel; I believe it to be a divine revelation; and endeavour to follow its directions.—I look upon it, as containing the most refined system of morality; as enforcing every virtue, by the strongest motives; and recommending all, by the most perfect example.

* Job. xl. 4. † Lev. xiii. 45.

Asp. To which you should add—as revealing that great MEDIATOR, who has fulfilled all righteousness, to effect our justification; who has all the fulness of the SPIRIT, to accomplish our regeneration. Otherwise, what you mention, is infinitely short of the *Gospel.*—It brings no glad tidings to fallen creatures. It administers no succours to ruined sinners. It is like writing a correct copy for the blind; or setting a laborious task to the disabled. Which would rather be an insult on their impotence, than a relief of their distress.

The first particular I wave at present. Only let me ask your opinion of the last; which is a grand doctrine, and a very distinguishing privilege of the gospel. I mean the doctrine, and the privilege of *spiritual regeneration.* Exclusive of which, all your endeavours to possess strict virtue and practise morality, will be no better than endeavours, to fly without wings, or run without feet.

While unimpressed with a sense of our original depravity, we shall probably sit down contented with some *superficial* reformation, and not aspire after a renewal of the heart. *Civility* will pass for sanctity, and a *temperate* disposition for a gracious habit. Why is the new birth, why are all the saving operations of the blessed SPIRIT, disregarded by some, derided by others? Because, these persons are insensible of their utter inability to all good, and of their abject slavery to all evil. Therefore, they see no reason for *this* divine agency, or for *that universal* change.

You also, my dear friend, while unacquainted with your natural corruption, cannot apprehend either the reasonableness or the necessity of being *renewed in the spirit of your mind**. But when experience has taught you the former, you will want no arguments to convince you of the latter.—Can creatures, who are *blind* in their

* Eph. iv. 23.

understandings, discern the things which belong to their eternal peace? Can those creatures, who are dead in sin, exercise the graces, or discharge the duties, of a christian life?——Can those creatures, whose hearts are at *enmity* against their GOD, either delight to do his will here, or will they be meet for his beatific presence hereafter?

Under the influence of such convictions, that new birth, which the gospel of CHRIST promises, which the SPIRIT of GOD produces, will appear as necessary for your state, and be as welcome to your soul, as these gentle dews are necessary for the languishing herbs, and welcome to the thirsty soil.

Ther. The dews, though refreshing to the flowers, may be too chilly for our constitutions. And see! the star of evening, by proclaiming the approach of night, has given us a warning to quit our arbour.—Some other time we must resume this enquiry. For I am by no means satisfied, that your theory agrees with experience.

Asp. I fear I have already kept you out too long. Let me just observe, as we go in—That the doctrine, however disagreeable in itself, is conducted to an *advantageous* issue. It is productive of a much more substantial consolation, than history assigns to the great, but exiled *Marius*. When he fled, with his ruined circumstances, to linger out the poor remains of life among the ruins of *Carthage*, what his chief support? " Contemplating, says my author, " that famous city in the dust, he was the less afflicted " with his own downfall *."

We have not been put off with such cold comforts, such *negative* benefits. The belief of original sin has a tendency—To make us humble—To shew us our need of CHRIST—To create in us a hunger and thirst after the renewing influences of his SPIRIT, and the justifying merit of his blessed righteousness.——So that it must be owing

* Inopem vitam in Tugurio ruinarum Carthaginensium toleravit: cum Marius aspiciens Carthaginem, illa intuens Marium, alter alteri possent esse Solatio.

VELL. PATERC.

to our own perverseness, or our own negligence, if we do not levy a tax upon our own loss, and rise even by our own fall.

GRACE is a benefit procured by the death of CHRIST, to be conveyed in the Holy Sacrament. And of this, who shall declare the preciousness? 'Tis a gift of surpassing excellency! 'Tis nothing less than GOD himself! The Holy Ghost and his graces are offered.—Wonder, O, heavens, and be amazed O earth, at the unsearchable riches of divine goodness!—The Holy GHOST, and his graces, are freely offered to sinners that are unworthy to breath the air!



END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.